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SCOUTING

AND A

HEALTHY

ENVIRONMENT



SCOUTING AND A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

PURPOSE OF THE BOOKLET

This booklet is written for Scout leaders. It is especially applicable to those in rural areas where the level of health education is low and access to health services difficult. But many urban areas suffer from the same limitations. The Scout leader working under such conditions may find that he can adapt this booklet for his own use.

But in areas which do not suffer from such limitations, environmental health is just as important, although the sources of bad health in the environment - like car pollution, urban alienation, etc. - may be less apparent. Perhaps this booklet will inspire those Scout leaders in such situations to think with more concern about such problems, and will motivate Scout leaders to take action.

HOW TO USE THE BOOKLET

This booklet can be used for :

- (a) Scout projects on environmental health,
- (b) Scout training courses on environmental health,
- (c) Scout publications on environmental health in other languages.

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	2
SECTION 1. - WATER SUPPLY	3 - 7
SECTION 2. - FOOD PROTECTION	8 -11
SECTION 3. - WASTE DISPOSAL	12 -15
SECTION 4. - USING A LATRINE	16 - 20

INTRODUCTION

GOOD HEALTH IS PRECIOUS...

Good health is something precious, something Scouting has always been concerned with. For those who have always enjoyed good health, it is often taken for granted. For others their good health may have been impaired by an unavoidable disease or by an accident.

...BUT RARE

But for millions and millions of people in many countries good health is something they have never known. Not enough of the right kind of food, or indeed of any kind of food, a shortage of money to buy food, endemic diseases like malaria and hookworm - such things are part of their way of life. It is especially difficult for the children, for they may never fully recover.

ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES

One set of important influences on a person's health lies in the environment. They may affect an individual, a family or a community. The way the people keep clean, protect the food they eat, keep their kitchens and houses clean, keep the water pure, get rid of their rubbish properly, use a latrine - all are vital aspects of good health. Potential dangers for bad health: impure water, flies on the food, dirt in the kitchen, a messy latrine, dirty hands, rubbish around the house - all these things provoke germs that lead to bad health. Everytime someone touches something dirty, he may transfer the germs to his hands - and then to his food - and then inside him.

UNDERSTANDING —> MOTIVATION —> ACTION...

If people can understand why these things are important, they will be motivated to do something about them. For understanding leads to motivation which leads to action; it leads to identifying resources that can be used, and methods that can be encouraged. It leads to better health. And the people can do all this themselves with a little encouragement and help.

...BY SCOUTS

For the Scouts, it means better health for them too, for they are members of such communities. But, more important, they can help others to understand; they can share their enthusiasm; and they can take action together. That is the meaning of Community Development.

What is ultimately important is not only the projects the Scouts and the community plan and organize together to make their environment more healthy; it is also the general awareness and attitude towards environmental health that everyone should have throughout his daily life.

SECTION 1.WATER SUPPLY

MANY DISEASES ARE CAUSED BY IMPURE WATER. SCOUTS CAN HELP A COMMUNITY UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF USING CLEAN WATER, AND THEY CAN WORK TOGETHER WITH THE PEOPLE TO IMPROVE THE WATER SUPPLY.

THE PROBLEM

Dirt may cause disease. If you wash with clean water, the dirt on your body will come off. If you drink only clean water, dirt will not get inside your body. Many diseases are caused by using impure water. Eight out of ten hospital beds are filled with people suffering from some illness related to water, according to the World Health Organization.

A Scout needs to be healthy; he also wants to help others be healthy. He should find all the ways of getting as much clean water as possible.

To have clean water, either take water from a protected spring or well; boil or filter any other water before you drink it.

WHAT SCOUTS SHOULD LEARN

1. Find the place where villagers go to get water for drinking and for washing themselves.
2. Tell which pond or river water can be good for drinking.
3. Recognize whether water from a spring or well is good for drinking.
4. Indicate to the people the danger of drinking dirty water.
5. Indicate to the people how they can get clean water from a spring or well.

WHAT SCOUTS CAN DO

1. The Scouts must first understand all about the problems of bad water and what can be done about it. They can ask the local Health Officer to run a course for them.
2. They can discuss this problem with the villagers so that they too come to understand the problem and possible solutions.

If the people in the village ask how they can get clean water, the Scouts can see where the people get the water they use and decide on what action to take together.

The people use :

1. Water from a pond,
2. Water from a river,
3. Water from a spring,
4. Water from a well.

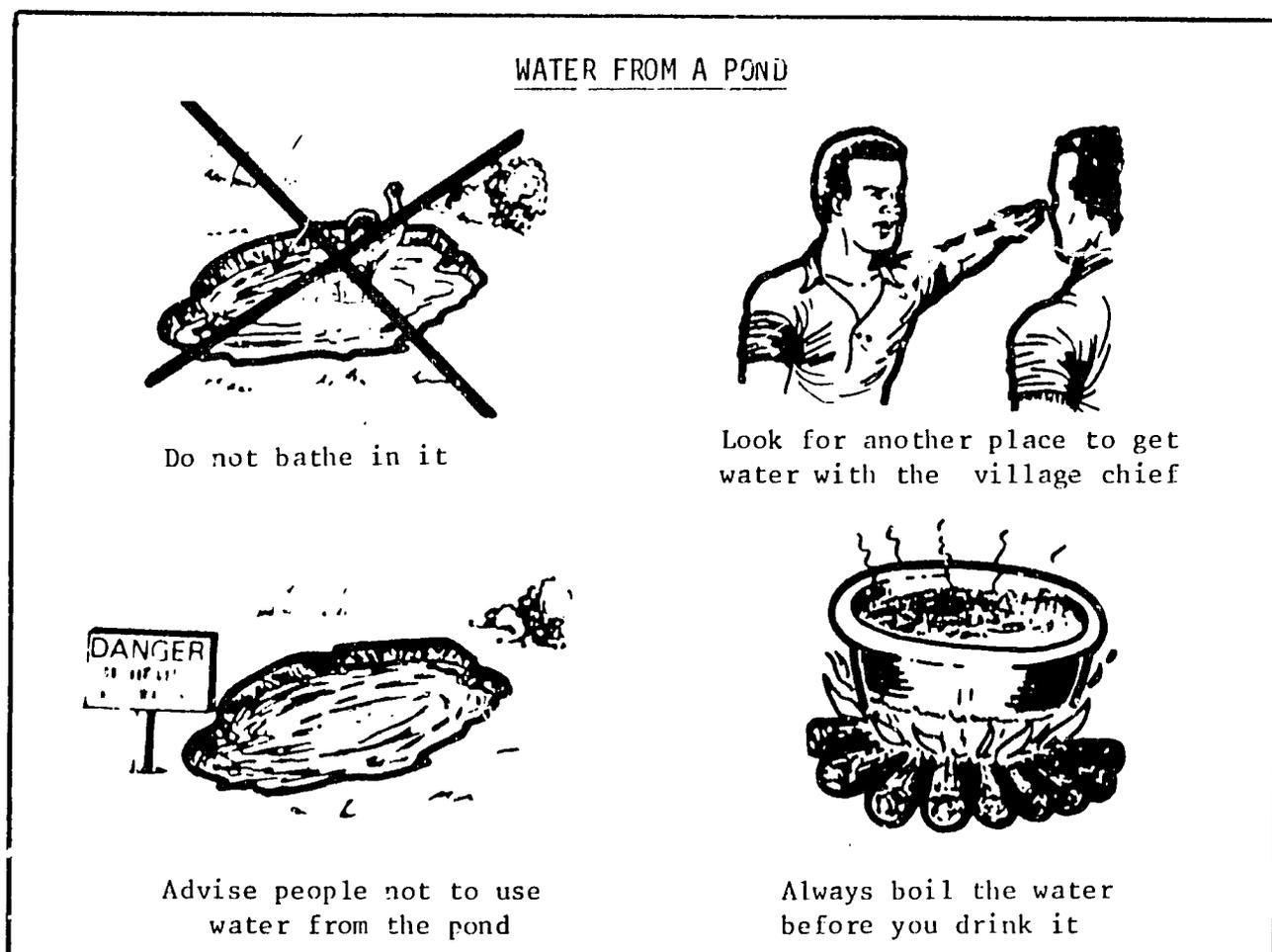
1. WATER FROM A POND

If there is no other place to get water from :

- (a) tell the people to boil or filter the water before they drink it;
- (b) advise the people not to bathe in this water;
- (c) see the village chief to find some other way of getting water (spring or well).

If there is another place to get water from (river, spring, well) :

- (a) advise the people not to use the water from the pond if the other place to get water from is not too far away, and to leave the pond for the cattle.

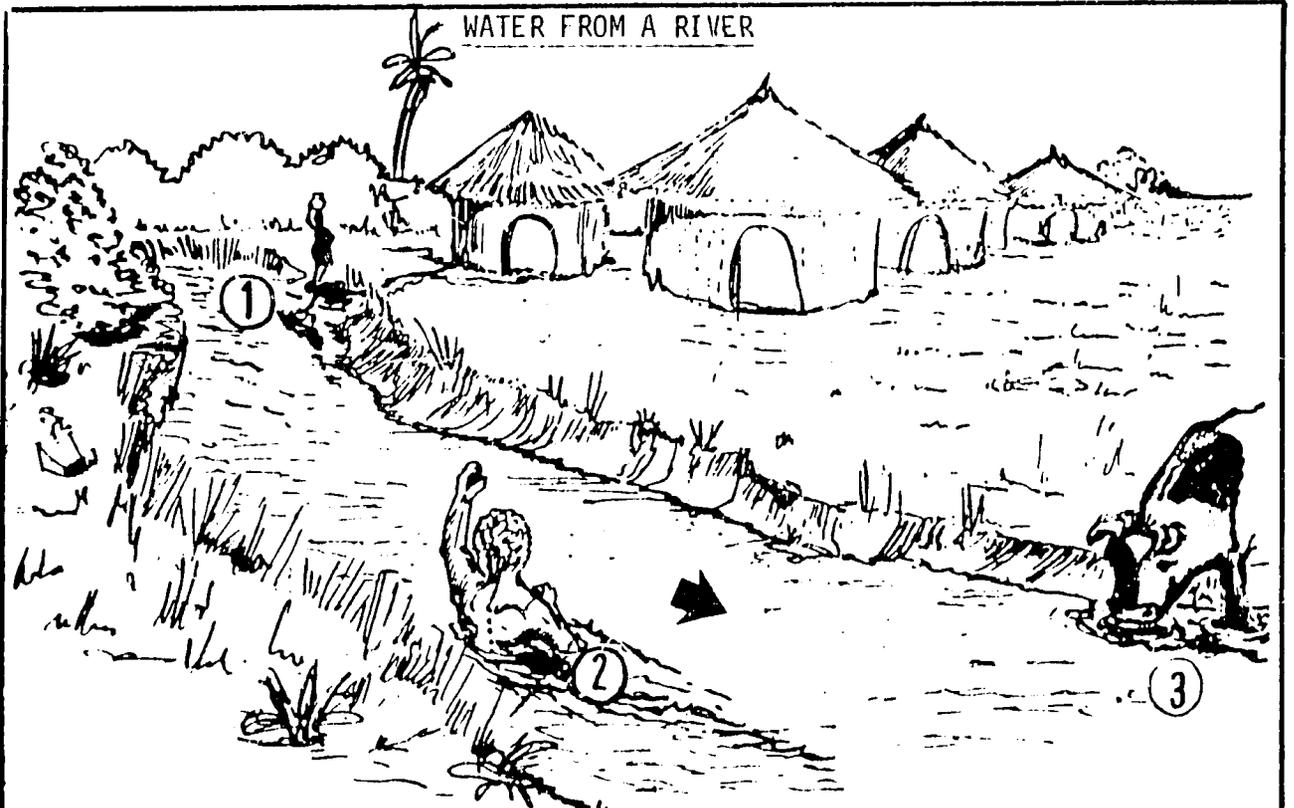
2. WATER FROM A RIVER

If there is no other place to get water from, you should :

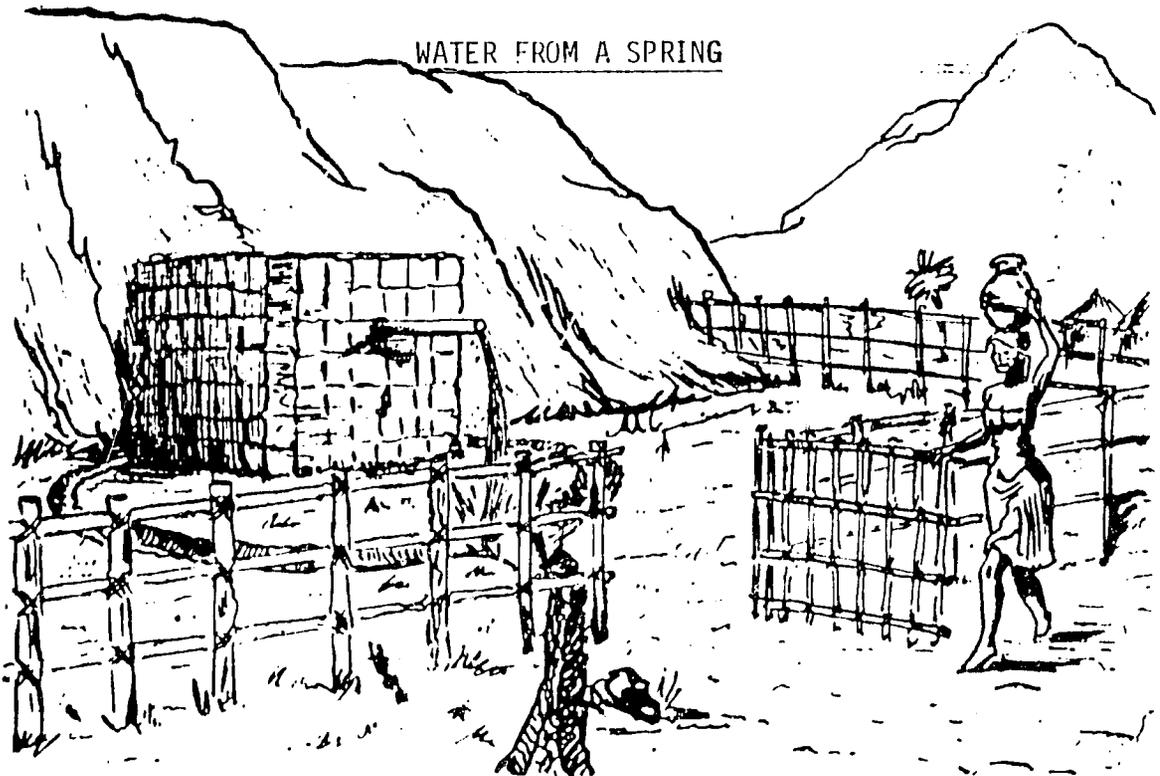
- (a) draw water from the river before it reaches your village. Tell the people to boil or filter the water before they drink it;
- (b) let people bathe or wash clothes in the river at the place where it leaves the village, and only let the animals drink the water even further down the river.

If there is a spring or a well :

- (a) encourage the people to use the water from the spring or the well for drinking, rather than the water from the river.



- 1 - WATER FOR DRINKING UPSTREAM
- 2 - BATHING AND WASHING CLOTHES
- 3 - ANIMALS DRINK DOWNSTREAM



A PROPERLY PROTECTED SPRING

3. WATER FROM A SPRING

A spring should be protected.

It is properly protected if :

- (a) there is a fence all the way round it about 20 metres away from the spring;
- (b) there is a ditch around the spring to let the rainwater drain away;
- (c) there is a 50cm high cemented stone wall round the spring;
- (d) there is a pipe coming out of this wall and the water is taken from this pipe.

If the spring is not properly protected, or if it is not being used :

- (a) talk with the village chief and with the people, plan a project to protect the spring properly;
- (b) ask assistance from the local Health Services.

If the villagers want to bring the water to the village along pipes :

- (a) talk with the village chief about this;
- (b) ask the assistance of the local Health Services;
- (c) with the people plan and implement a project to finance and install the pipes.

4. WATER FROM A WELL

A well should be protected.

It is properly protected if :

- (a) it is situated at least 20 metres away from a latrine or from a rubbish heap;
- (b) it is at least 3 metres deep;
- (c) it is lined inside with stones stuck with mortar;
- (d) it is surrounded by a stone wall which is about 50cm high;
- (e) there is a ditch for the rainwater to drain away;
- (f) people do not let dirt get into it, and they do not wash in it.

If the well is not properly protected :

- (a) discuss with the village chief about the need for protecting the well;
- (b) ask the assistance of the local Health Services to choose the place for a new well, and plan and carry out its construction.

If the villagers want to make the well work better :
(by putting in a lever, or a windmill, or a pump)

- (a) discuss this matter with the village chief;
- (b) ask the assistance of the local Health Services;
- (c) with the people plan and implement a project to improve the well.



SECTION 2.FOOD PROTECTION

FOOD IS VERY PRECIOUS; THEREFORE :

- YOU SHOULD NOT WASTE IT OR LET IT GO BAD
- YOU SHOULD KEEP IT CLEAN

DIRTY FOOD CAUSES DISEASES, SUCH AS DIARRHOEA.

SCOUTS CAN HELP THE COMMUNITY UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF PROTECTING FOOD PROPERLY. THEY CAN ALSO DEMONSTRATE IMPROVED TECHNIQUES.

WHAT SCOUTS CAN DO

1. Find out what kinds of food the village people generally eat.
2. List four ways to store grain to protect it from rats.
3. List three precautions to look for when buying food from a trader.
4. Demonstrate to the housewife how to store food in the house.
5. Show how hands should be washed.
6. Show how to cook or boil food.
7. Show how to put food on a clean plate.

Scouts can ask a health officer or an agricultural officer to teach them these things in a short course.

1. WHAT DO THE PEOPLE EAT ?

- GRAIN
- OTHER FOODS

2. HOW DO THEY PREPARE THEIR FOOD ?

1. WHAT DO THE PEOPLE EAT ?

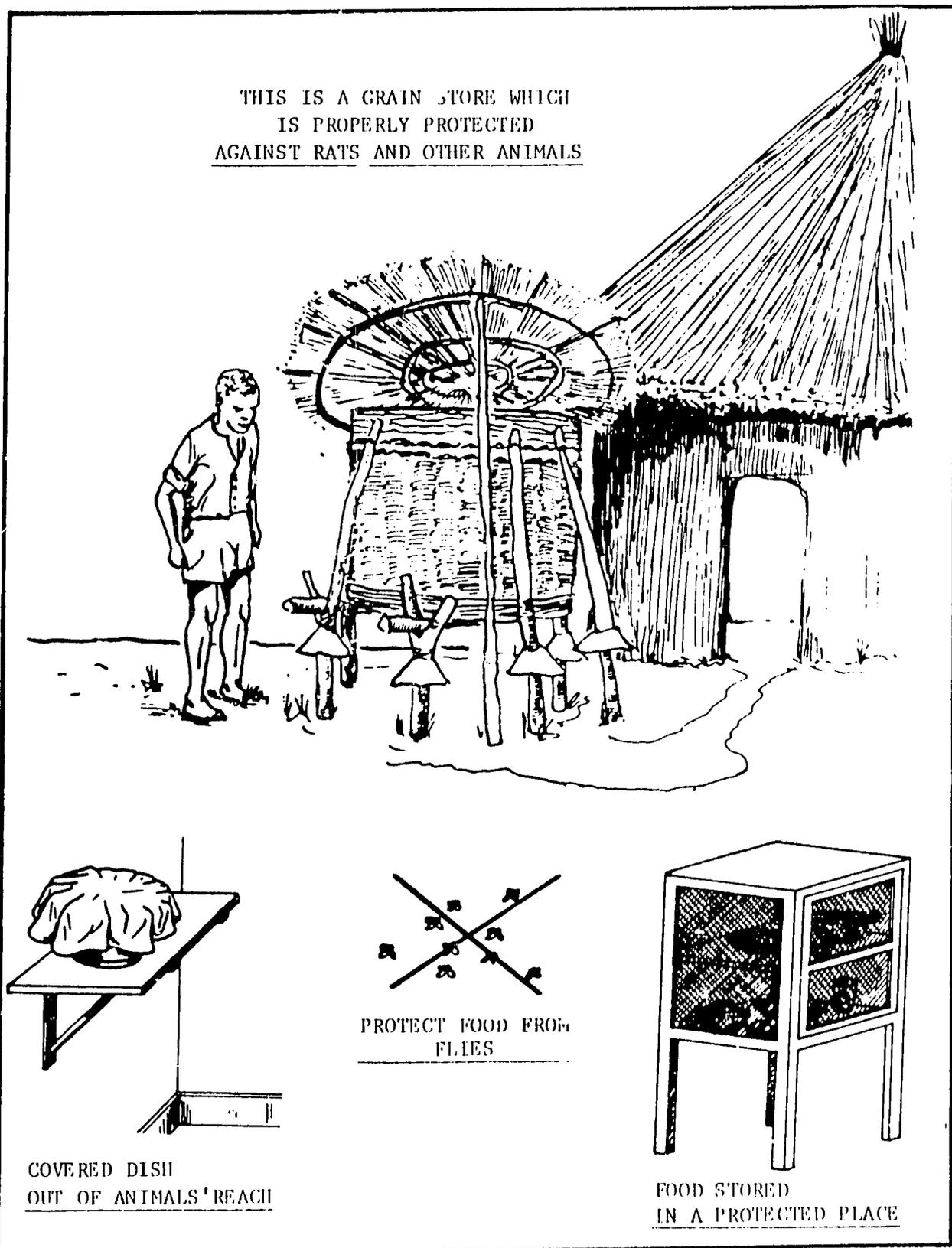
GRAIN (wheat, or rice, or millet...)

The grain store is properly protected against rats if :

- (a) the grain is kept in a place which is closed in on all sides;
- (b) this place is raised at least 30cm above the ground;
- (c) there is no grain or any other food lying around near this place or near the house;
- (d) there is a lid which closes this place properly.

If the grain store is not protected properly against rats :

- (a) show the head of the family what to do (i);
 (see also Scout booklets on Appropriate Technology on this subject.)
- (b) if there are still some rats about one month afterwards (someone has seen rats or signs of rats), ask the advice of a health or agricultural officer.



OTHER FOODS (meat, bread, milk, eggs, vegetables, fruits...)

The food bought from a trader is clean if :

- (a) it is kept away from the sun;
- (b) it is covered with a cloth or protected from flies;
- (c) the trader's hands are clean and his place is clean.

Otherwise show the trader what to do, and come and see once in a while if your advice is being followed. Encourage the people in the community to do the same.

The food is properly stored in the house if :

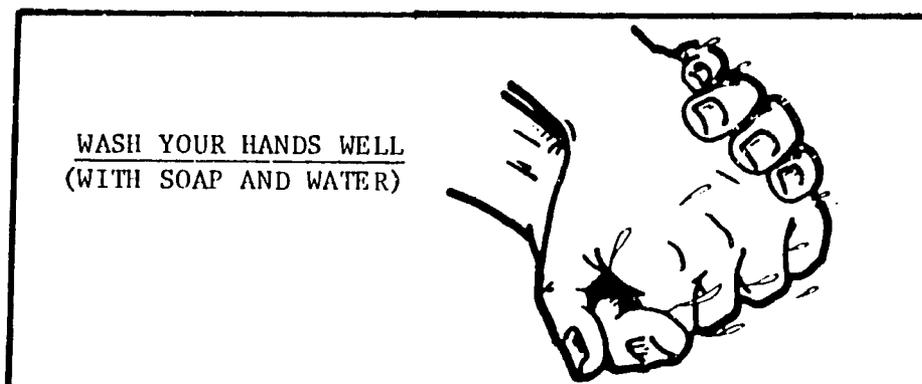
- (a) it is put in a container covered with a cloth;
- (b) it is put in a high place in a cool part of the house.

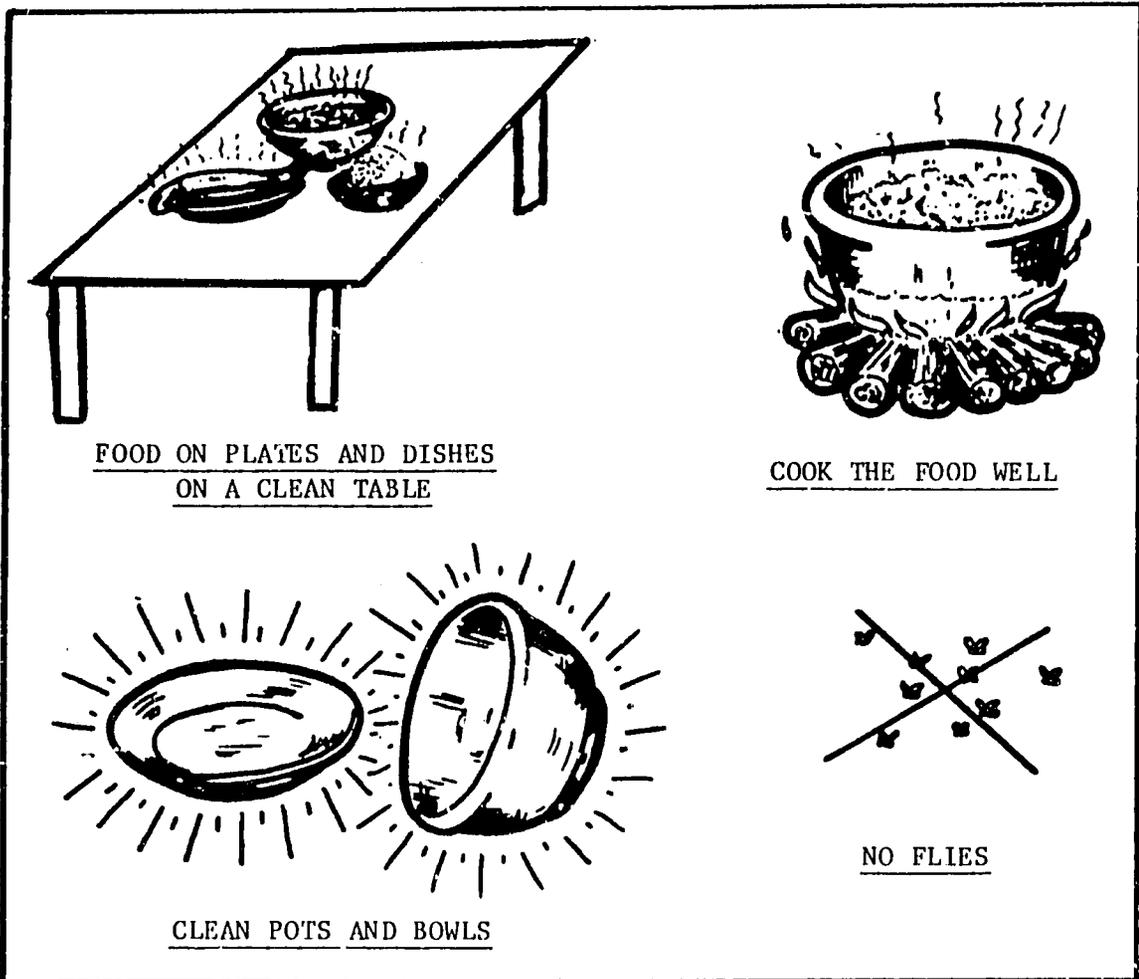
Otherwise show the mother what to do.

2. HOW DO THE PEOPLE PREPARE THEIR FOOD ?

To prepare food properly, you should :

- (a) wash your hands with clean water and soap, or the equivalent, before touching the food;
 - show the women who are preparing food at home how to do this,
 - show the people in the restaurant how to do this,
 - go and see the village chief and ask him to ask the people to wash their hands, especially after they have been to the toilet, before they touch food;
- (b) cook or boil the food and peel the skin off all fruits. You should :
 - put the food in a clean container,
 - leave the food over a hot fire for 15 minutes, especially if it involves water from the pond or river, milk, or meat;
- (c) serve and store the food cleanly. You should :
 - put the food in a clean container (i.e. rinsed in clean water),
 - store it properly in the house.





FOOD ON PLATES AND DISHES
ON A CLEAN TABLE

COOK THE FOOD WELL

CLEAN POTS AND BOWLS

NO FLIES

BE CAREFUL

CLEAN FOOD BRINGS HEALTH TO ALL THE FAMILY

- TO AVOID WASTING THIS FOOD :

prevent flies, worms, rats and animals from coming and eating it before you do.

- TO KEEP FOOD CLEAN :

prevent things (dust from the house and the road, flies, cloth, children's or adults' hands) from touching what you are going to eat.

PROTECT YOUR FOOD AGAINST THE
SUN, THE WIND, THE RAIN,
INSECTS, DIRT AND ANIMALS

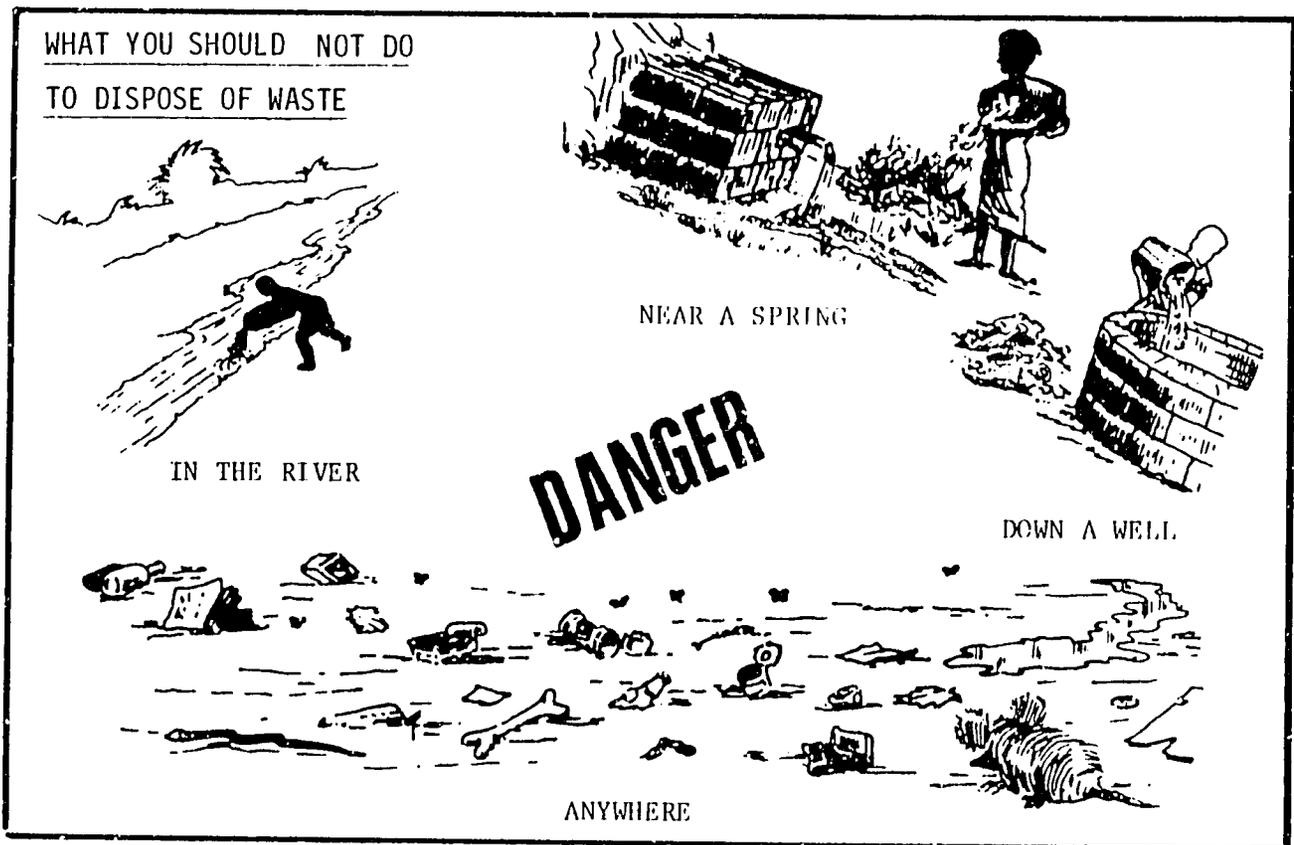
SECTION 3.WASTE DISPOSAL

SCOUTS CAN HELP THE COMMUNITY UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF DISPOSING OF THEIR RUBBISH IN PROPER PLACES. THEY CAN WORK TOGETHER TO BUILD A COMMON WASTE DISPOSAL PIT.

THE PROBLEM

You should not dispose of their waste or rubbish just anywhere, because it may carry disease.

You should therefore throw waste in places where neither you, nor children, nor animals nor flies can touch it.

WHAT SCOUTS CAN DO

1. Find out the places where the village people generally go to throw their waste.
2. Decide whether or not waste is being properly disposed of outside houses.
3. Decide whether the village pit is being properly used or not.
4. Explain to the village chief how the village pit should be used.
5. Explain to the head of a family how to dispose of waste properly outside a house.
6. Know how to use the services of a health officer in solving this problem.
7. Offer to help the villagers build waste disposal pits.

Scouts can ask a health officer to teach them these things, by running a short course.

The people dispose of their waste in one (or more) of four ways :

1. The people dispose of their waste into a common pit.
2. The people dispose of their waste outside their houses.
3. The people dispose of their waste near the river.
4. The people dispose of their waste in the fields.

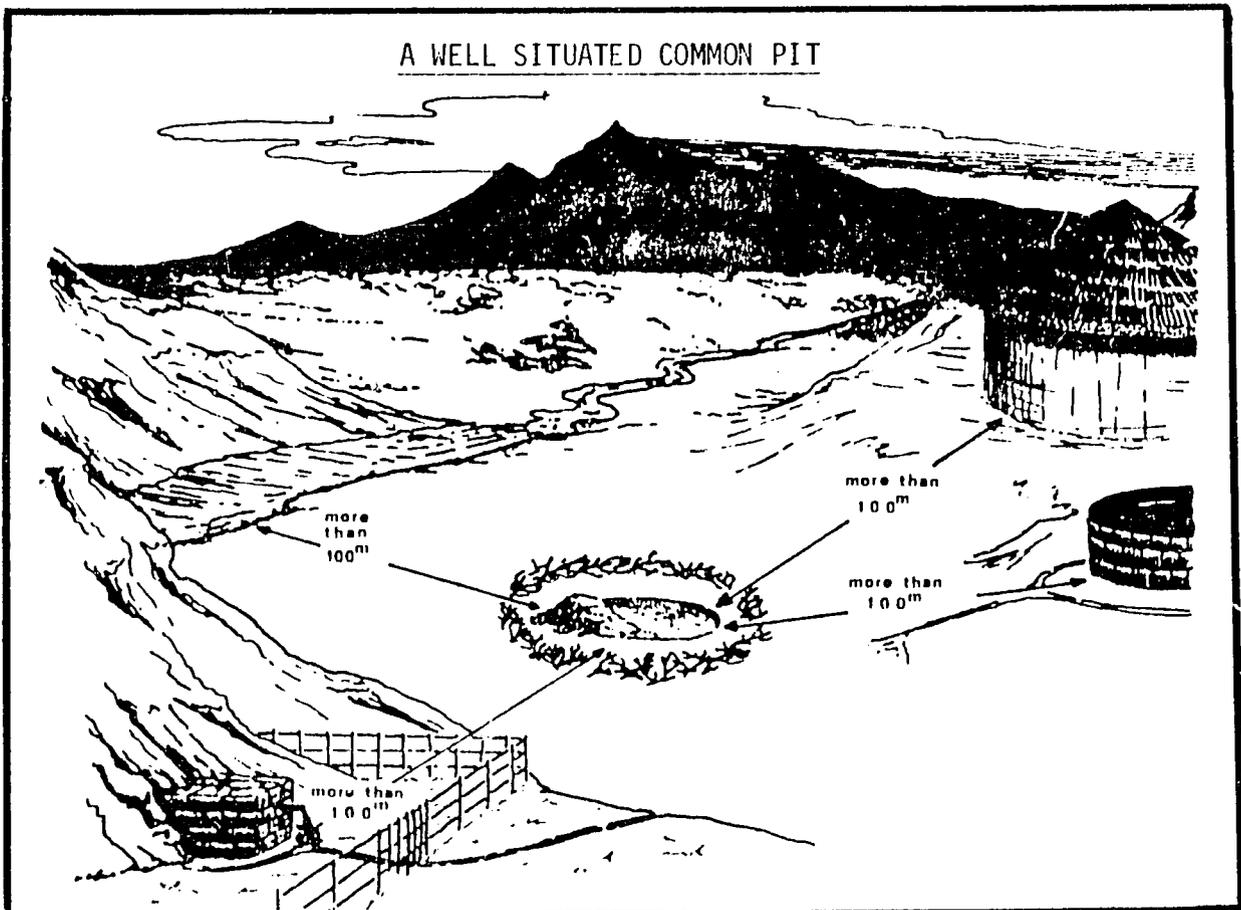
1. IF THE PEOPLE DISPOSE OF THEIR WASTE INTO A COMMON PIT

The pit is being properly used when :

- (a) it is situated outside the village;
- (b) it is situated in a hollow and not on top of a hill;
- (c) it is situated at least 100 metres away from a river, a well, a spring, or a house;
- (d) the waste is piled up in a hole and not scattered around;
- (e) the waste is always covered with a layer of earth which is 2cm to 3cm thick;
- (f) it is surrounded by a fence made of branches.

If the pit is not being properly used :

- (a) explain and show the village chief how to get a good common pit;
- (b) visit the pit regularly to see if your advice is being followed.

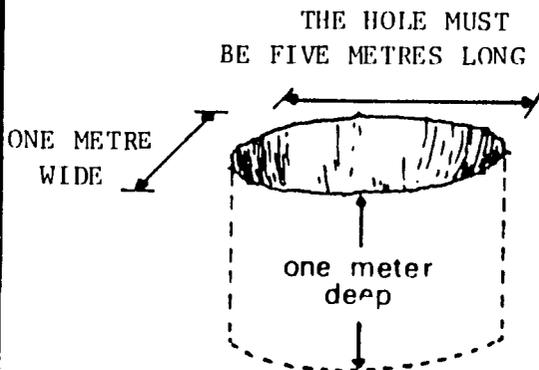


2. IF THE PEOPLE DISPOSE OF THEIR WASTE OUTSIDE THEIR HOUSES

Waste is being properly disposed of when :

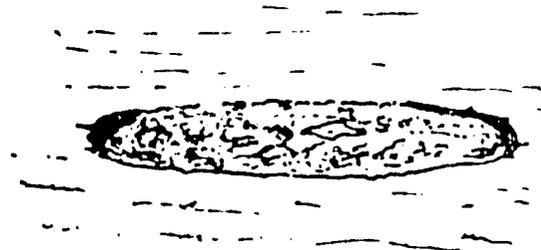
- (a) it is piled up in a hole and not scattered around;
- (b) it is put at least 20 metres away from a house, a river, a spring or a well;
- (c) it is covered with a little earth to stop animals and flies from coming and eating it.

WHAT YOU CAN DO WITH WASTE

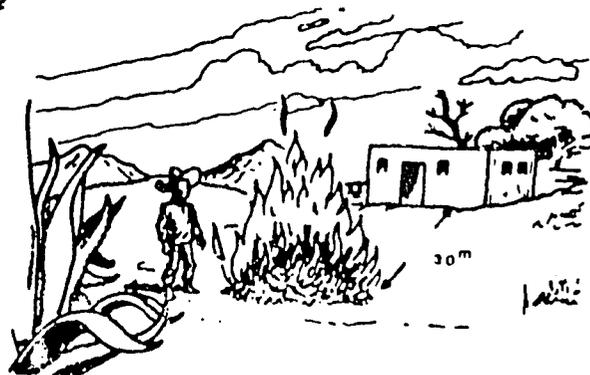


DAILY THROW THE WASTE IN THE PIT AND COVER IT WITH EARTH OR LEAVES

BURY IT IN A HOLE COVERED IN EARTH



BURN IT



If the waste is not properly disposed of :

- (a) explain and show the head of the family how to dispose of waste outside his house;
- (b) discuss with the village chief about having a common pit dug;
- (c) ask a health officer to help in having the pit dug;
- (d) see if the new pit is being properly used.

3. IF THE PEOPLE DISPOSE OF THEIR WASTE NEAR THE RIVER**This can cause disease :**

- (a) discuss this problem with the village chief and the head of the family,
- (b) help them understand the importance of using a pit or burning it once a week.

4. IF THE PEOPLE DISPOSE OF THEIR WASTE IN THE FIELDS**There is no danger if :**

- (a) the waste is not piled up less than 100 metres away from the house, a river, a well or a spring.

There is danger if :

- (a) the waste is piled up less than 100 metres away from the house, a river, a well or a spring;
- (b) discuss the problem with the village chief and the head of the family and help them understand the importance of using a pit or burning the waste once a week.

IF YOU PUT ONLY LEAVES, VEGETABLES,
 FRUITS AND ROOTS IN THE PIT, YOU
 WILL SOON HAVE FERTILIZER FOR GROWING
 THINGS. THIS IS CALLED COMPOST.

SECTION 4.USING A LATRINE

SCOUTS CAN HELP VILLAGERS UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF BUILDING LATRINES AND USING THEM PROPERLY. THEY CAN WORK TOGETHER TO BUILD A LATRINE.

THE PROBLEM

There are many diseases that are carried by stools (human waste and urine). If people defecate or urinate just anywhere, then people get sick, because insects will transfer the germs.

You should therefore relieve yourself in places where neither you, nor children, nor animals, nor flies can touch your waste.

WHAT SCOUTS CAN DO

1. Find out the places where the village people go to pass their stools.
2. Explain to the people that it is dangerous to defecate just anywhere because stools carry diseases.
3. Give advice on why and how to build a latrine.
4. Decide whether or not a latrine is being properly used.
5. Teach the proper way to use a latrine.
6. Offer to help the villagers build latrines.

Scouts can ask a health officer to teach them these things.

The Scouts may find that the people defecate in one (or more) of four possible ways :

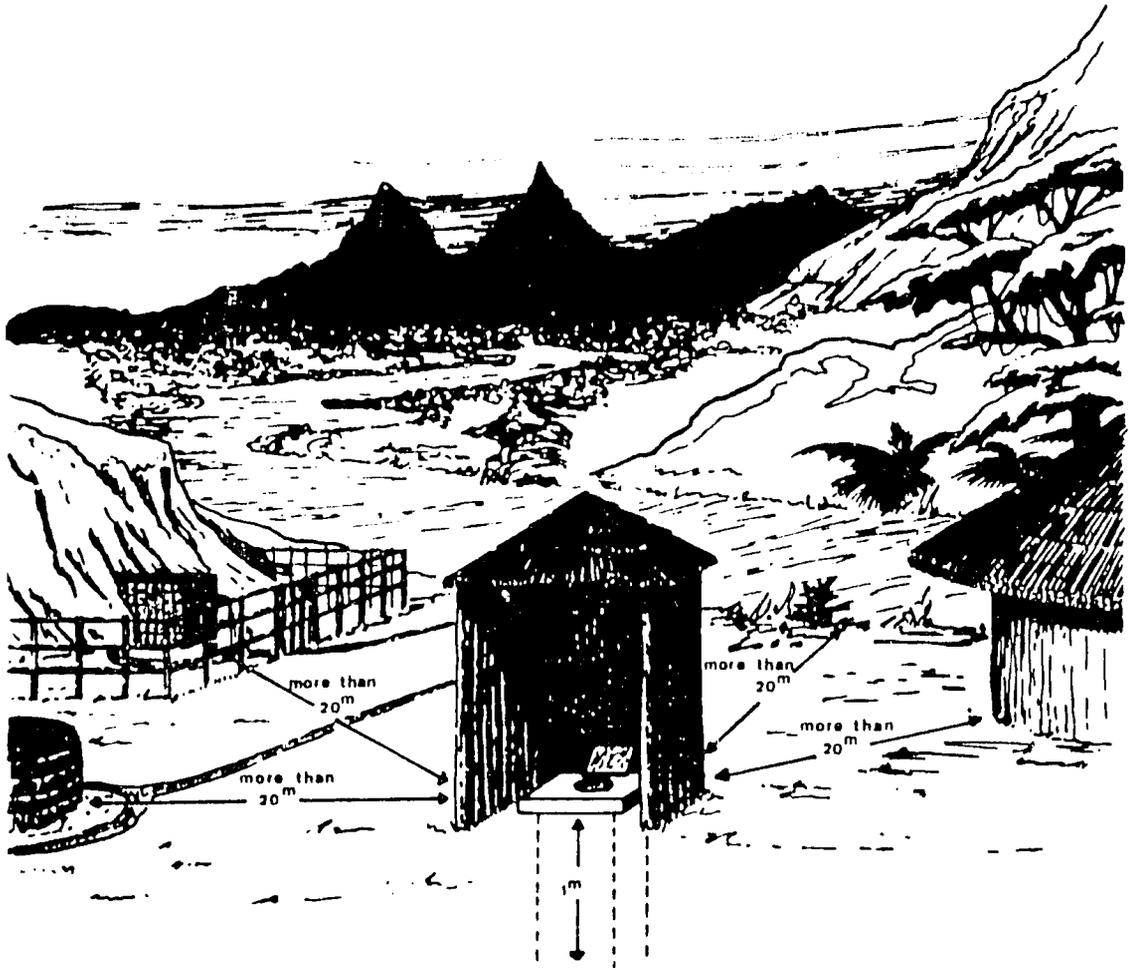
1. The people use a latrine.
2. The people defecate around the house.
3. The people defecate in the river.
4. The people defecate in the fields or in the forest.

1. IF THE PEOPLE USE A LATRINE

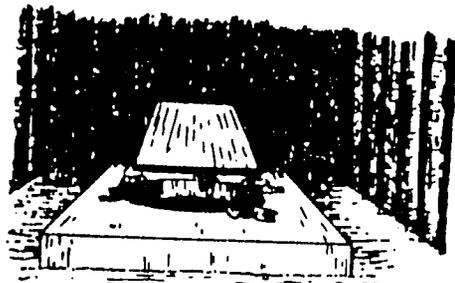
A latrine is being properly used if :

- (a) it is built at least 20 metres away from a house, a river, a well or a spring;
- (b) the hole is at least 1 metre deep;
- (c) the hole is covered with a slab (made of wood or concrete) which has a hole in the middle;
- (d) the hole in the middle of the slab is covered with a lid;
- (e) the latrine is covered by a roof and surrounded by a wall made of branches or other available material.

A PROPERLY BUILT LATRINE



THE SLAB OVER THE
LATRINE MUST BE
KEPT CLEAN



DANGER

CLEAN WITH WATER

FREQUENTLY

If a latrine is not being properly used :

- (a) discuss this problem with the head of the family;
- (b) see if there are any stools on the slab. If so, have it cleaned with water;
- (c) go and have a look now and then to see if the people are following your advice.

2. IF THE PEOPLE DEFECATE AROUND THE HOUSE

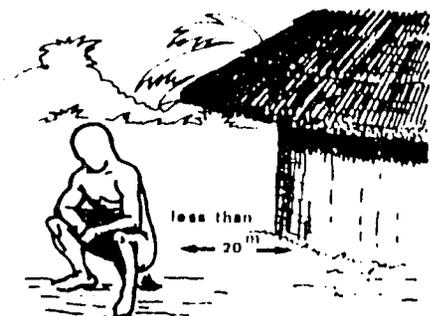
There is a danger of disease from the stools when people defecate less than 20 metres away from the houses or on the paths which lead to the houses.

- (a) Discuss this problem with the heads of the families, so that they will tell their family to defecate in a latrine (1) or in the fields (4).
- (b) Discuss with the village chief and ask him to speak to the people in the village. If he wants to build some latrines, discuss this question with a health officer, and plan a project with the villagers to build the latrines.

Afterwards make sure that the latrines are being properly used (1).

There is no danger if the people defecate as far as possible from the houses. However, advise the people not to defecate less than 20 metres away from their houses, and see the advice to be given when people defecate in the fields or in the forest (item 4 below).

WHAT YOU SHOULD NOT DO



DANGER

WHY ?

TOO NEAR THE HOUSE



DANGER

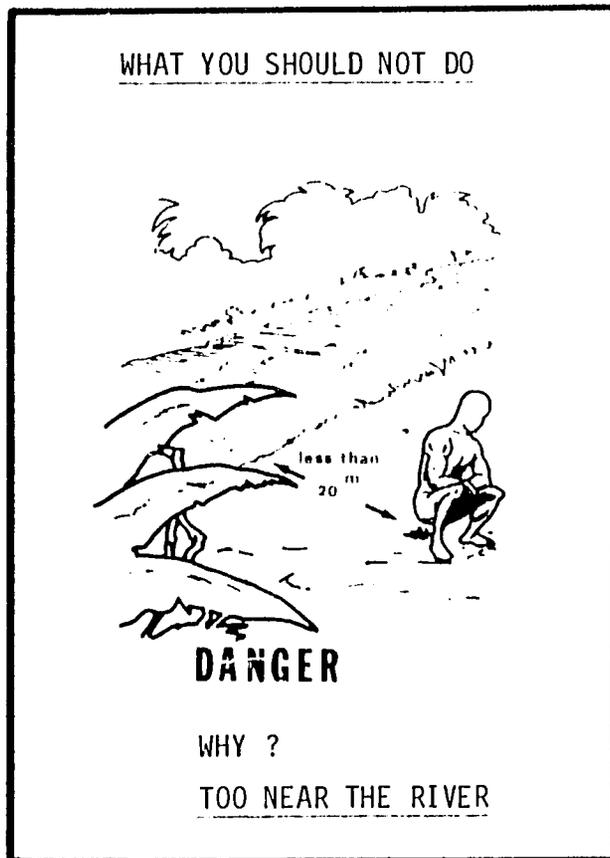
WHY ?

TOO NEAR THE PATH

3. IF THE PEOPLE DEFECATE IN THE RIVER

Every time someone defecates in the river or less than 20 metres from the river, or on a path which leads to the river, it is dangerous.

- (a) Discuss this problem with the village chief and ask him to talk to the people in the village.
- (b) Ask him to have latrines built and offer to help him build them.



4. IF THE PEOPLE DEFECATE IN THE FIELDS OR IN THE FOREST

There is little danger of disease if people defecate in the fields or in the forest provided that they do it :

- (a) more than 20 metres away from a house, a spring, a river or a well;
- (b) far away from a path or a track.

If the animals usually eat in the field where the people go and defecate, discuss the situation with a health officer and the village chief.

In any case, advise the people to defecate in a little ditch and to cover their stools with some earth.

AS A SCOUT YOU CAN HELP YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS TO BE HEALTHIER AND PERHAPS SAVE LIVES. YOU CAN HELP YOUR COMMUNITY LEADERS, YOUR HEALTH OFFICER, AND ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY TO HELP MAKE YOUR COMMUNITY A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT. BE AN EXAMPLE YOURSELF; UNDERSTAND AND HELP OTHERS TO UNDERSTAND; AND TAKE ACTION.

Credit

These ideas have been adapted from "The Primary Health Worker", published by the World Health Organization, Geneva.

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