

# Squatting Activity - Facilitator notes

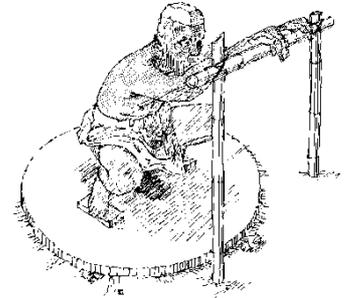
**Purpose:** To encourage discussion between users and service providers about design of infrastructure.

**Diversity message:** Men and women, old and young, use infrastructure in different ways, because of sex, age or physical attributes (e.g. shape, size, strength, impairments, ailments or injuries) and socially determined roles.

**Engineering message:** The design of infrastructure can be improved if designers consult users in a way that they can understand.

**Materials needed:** Clear floor space, large (newspaper size) plain paper and marker pens (different colours if available); cushion/ pillow. *Optional:* other materials to simulate impairments (see step 5 below).

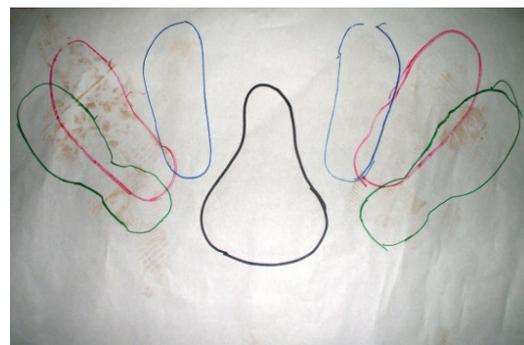
**Time needed:** 30-60 minutes.



## Activity

The activity can be carried out with a group of any number of people.

1. Place a large sheet of plain paper on the floor, preferably on a smooth hard surface. Draw a keyhole shaped 'toilet hole' in the centre. Ask the question: "How do we decide where to put the footplates?"
2. Invite a volunteer to squat over the hole. (If the group seem reluctant, the facilitator can squat first, to make people feel relaxed.)
3. Ask a second volunteer to draw round each foot of the 'squatting' with a pen (use a different colour for each 'squatting'). To emphasise the differences, try to invite volunteers of different shapes and sizes, e.g. the tallest/largest participant, followed by the smallest, the fattest and so on.



Participants draw around each others' feet.

**Hint:** Squatting is a sensitive issue. Participants may prefer do this activity in single sex groups, with discussion in a mixed group afterwards.

Remember - volunteers only. DO NOT pick on people as it can make them feel uncomfortable.

Keep the atmosphere light-hearted. The facilitator can 'play-act' surprised and puzzled that the solution is not simple.

You should already see a difference in where the feet are placed. Hold up the paper and

ask: "Is it clear yet where to put the footplates?"

Identify another (preferably male) volunteer. But just before he squats, tie a large heavy cushion or pillow to his stomach, or insert it up his shirt to 'make him pregnant'. This is likely to make it more difficult to squat. (Note: choose a participant who is not shy or easily embarrassed!)

4. When participants experience difficulty, ask what would help them. Look for objects lying around to bring for them to hold onto, e.g. two bricks, or a stick to provide a pole for support.
5. Next, introduce different impairments: For example, strap cardboard on a participant's leg to make it rigid, and give them a stick for support. (To avoid injury, ask other participants to stand either side to support the person if he/she needs it.)

6. Blindfold the next participant and give them a stick to feel their way. Ask the participant and onlookers what would help them locate their position better.



HSA participant simulating a visual impairment (Photo: Sian White, LSHTM)

## Discussion

- Does one size fit all?
- How can designers find out what different people need?
- What about other aspects of the latrine, e.g. space needed, need for something to hold onto, raising footrests for visually impaired people... ?
- Are there other issues to consider, e.g. privacy/ ease of cleaning/ convenience/ safety/ hand washing/ anal cleansing?



Elderly participant squatting (Photo: Plan Malawi)

## Types of participants

This exercise can be carried out with participants from all backgrounds. The wider the range of participants, the richer the discussion.

## Simulating (pretending) impairments

- **For awareness-raising/training**

Many participants may never have experienced or given a thought to the difficulties of squatting. It can be an 'eye-opener' for them to experience, even for only 5 minutes, the difficulties of a pregnant woman, or a physical impairment. This can be powerful in changing attitudes.

- **For community mobilisation or planning**

**But...** There is no substitute for directly involving the most marginalised users. This can be empowering for a disabled person who may never have been consulted or had an opportunity to speak out before, and demonstrates the importance of valuing the experience and knowledge of each participant.



HSA simulating a physical impairment - shows the need for support to squat (Photo: Sian White, LSHTM)

Adapted from: Jones, H. (2012) Designing a Pit Latrine Slab - facilitator notes. WaterAid/ WEDC, Loughborough University: UK.

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