

# Leave no girl behind

In his address to the Rotary International Convention in June 2021, Shekhar Mehta urged Rotary members to put improving girls' futures at the forefront of their work. "It is important that we empower girls," said Mehta, who was shortly to take office as the 2021-22 Rotary president, "as we all find that more often than not, the girl is disadvantaged. We will serve all children, but our laser focus will be specially on the girl."

Mehta made empowering girls one of his presidential initiatives, and his focus is particularly timely. Women continue to face economic hurdles, declining levels of political participation, and challenges in the workplace, according to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021. And the COVID-19 pandemic is among the factors that have extended the amount of time that experts estimate it will take to close the gender gap from an already daunting 99.5 years to 135.6 years.

# **areas of focus**

**Water, sanitation and hygiene = clean water and toilet for girls and boys**

**Basic education and literacy= school's books, pens and stationery items  
education about why boys and girls are different**

**Peace building and conflict prevention= no harassment ,no assault  
between fathers, boys ,women and girls**

**All these areas of focus for the same goal:**

**Helping  
The girls, the boys and the families  
in Madagascar**





# **The taboo of menstruation in Madagascar, an obstacle to women's emancipation**

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**\*\*In Madagascar, and more particularly in rural areas, menstruation has been identified as an obstacle to girls' schooling. On the one hand, poor access to suitable infrastructure and menstrual products can make it difficult for girls to participate in social, educational and economic activities during menstruation.**

## **Lack of information**

Almost all the women we met use fabric as a sanitary towel, a sort of square bought from a second-hand clothes shop which is often very worn out. Even exposing this fabric to the sun, in order to dry it, is a source of shame in rural areas. Women prefer to hide it and do not discuss the subject, even amongst themselves.

Amarante Norolalao Ranerason, a women's rights activist, explained to us that in addition to the lack of access to basic infrastructure and necessities, women are also held back by a lack of information on menstruation. She told us the story of a young girl who was slapped by her father when she got her first period because he believed that she had had sexual intercourse and that was why she was bleeding.

The activist explained that for women in Madagascar, menstruation is – cycle after cycle – a moment that generates anxiety and social exclusion, fed by old taboos and misconceptions. As a result, the island's women are doubly penalised.

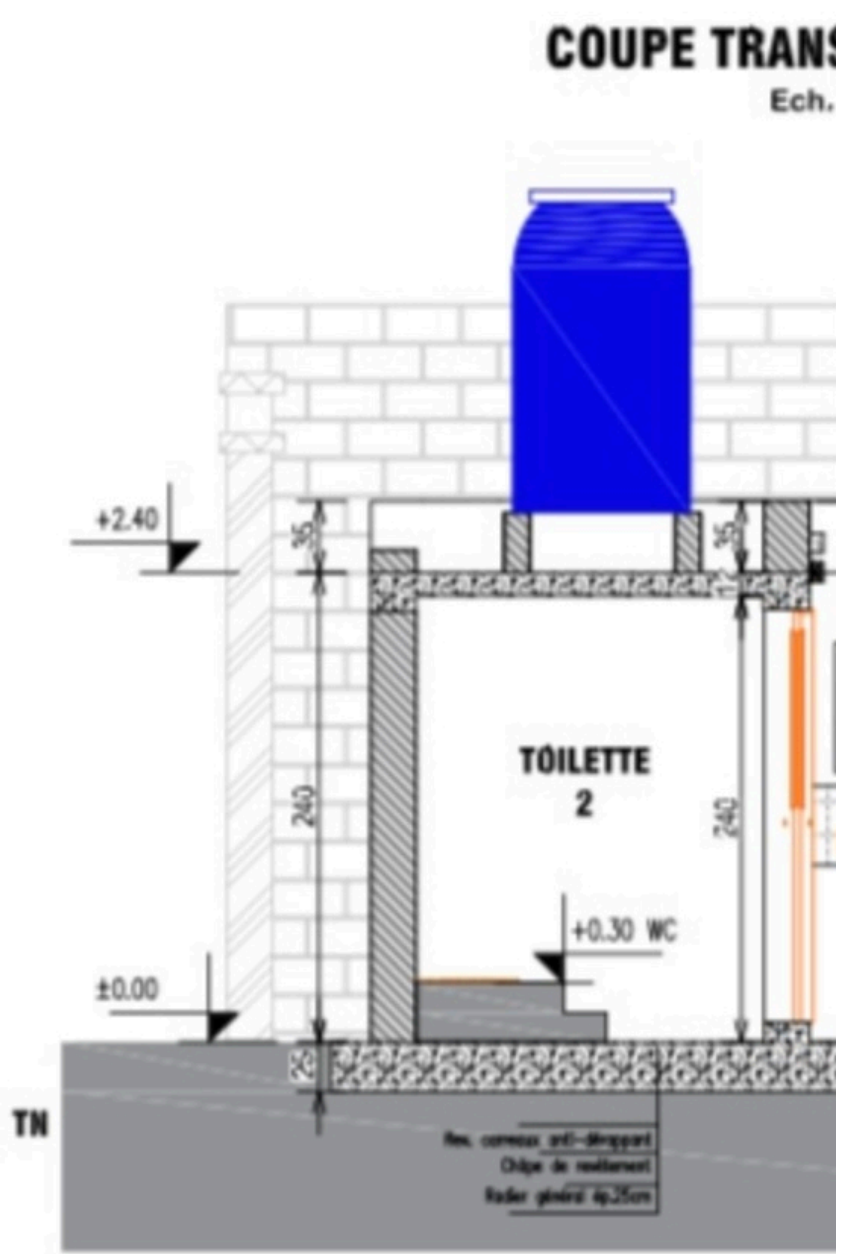
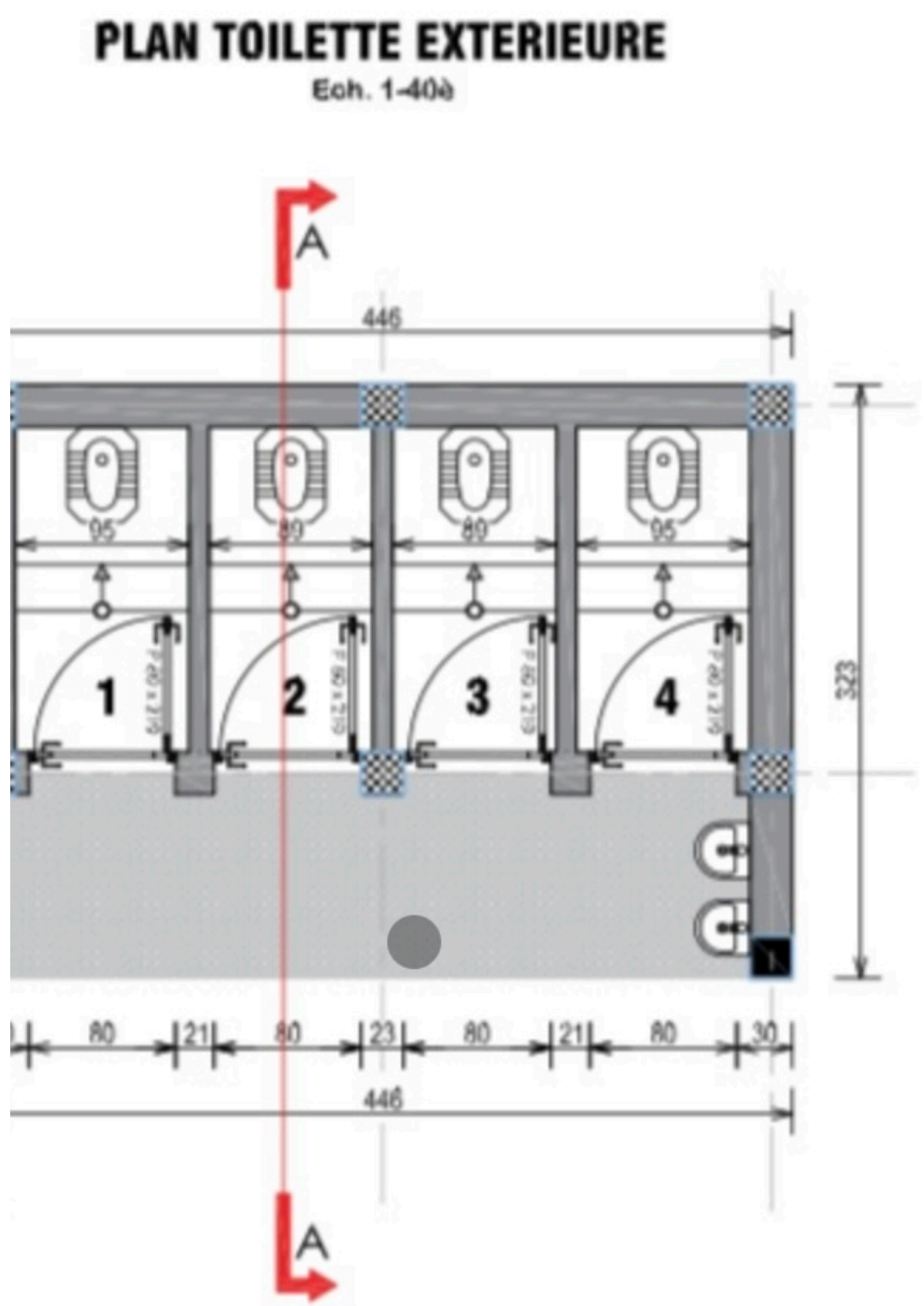
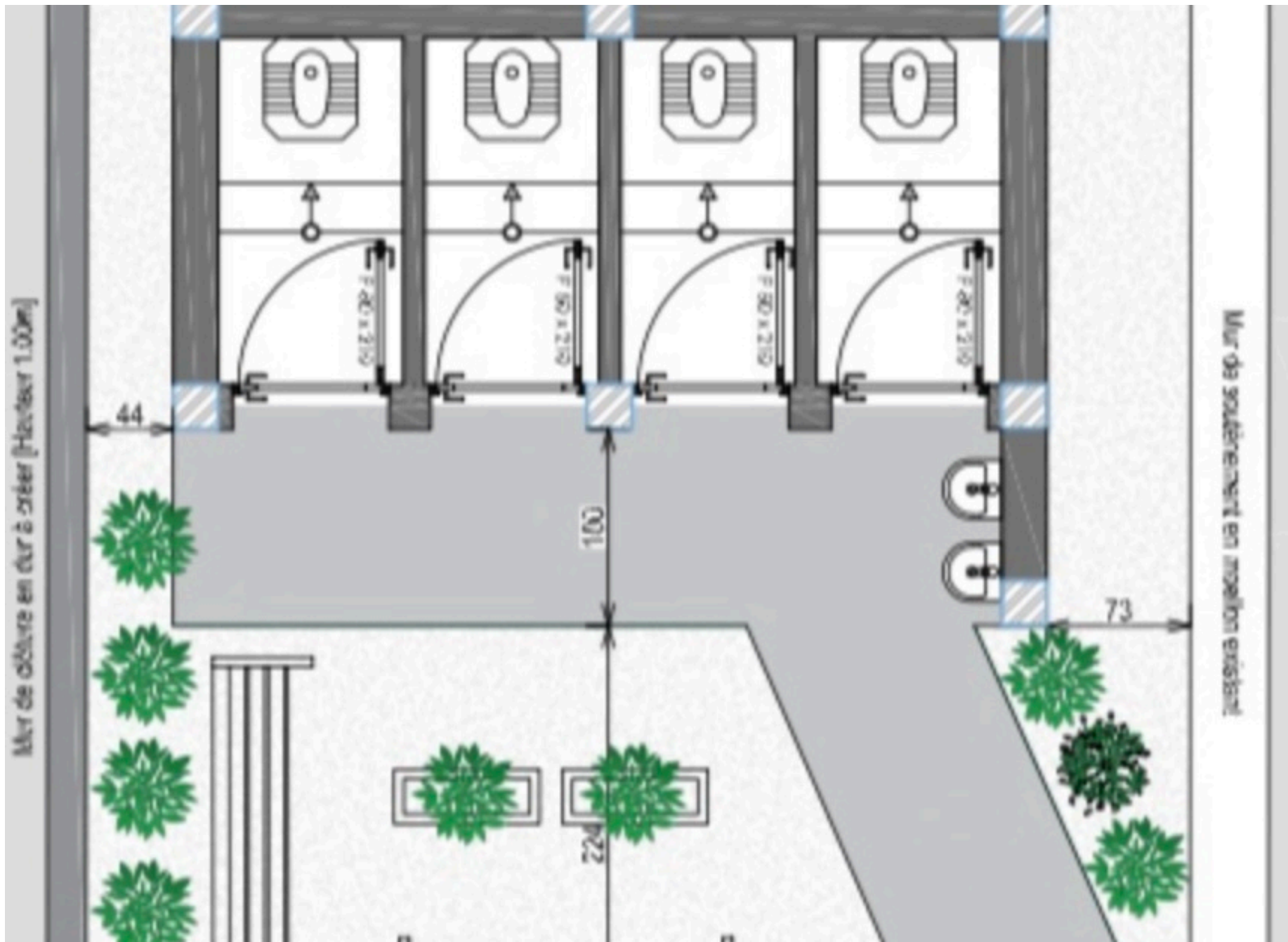


# Only one toilet available now





# The project











school



# THANKS TO YOU

## The magic of Rotary is coming soon in Madagascar

The Magic of Rotary



Rotary International President-Elect Stephanie Urchick announced her theme for the 2024-25 Rotary year: **THE MAGIC OF ROTARY.**

