



Sustaining and Scaling School Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Plus Community Impact



Quality of School WASH

Several Far-ranging Factors Drive the Success of School WASH Interventions

Impact and Sustainability

Findings from the SWASH+ project demonstrate that with minimal training on and investment in school infrastructure, schools can improve knowledge and practices relating to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). For example, if schools are provided with a limited supply of hypochlorite solution and educated about safe water treatment then at least 40% will continue treating their water a year later after supplies have run out, compared with 4.5% in schools that have not received the supplies and education. However, with additional time, even these results may not be sustainable. Data collection relating to sustainability has revealed that on an unannounced visit three years after the initial intervention:

- Although 87% of schools provided drinking water, only 27% had treated their water
- Although 63% of schools had handwashing water available, only 8% of schools had soap

There is a strong need therefore to implement quality interventions that will not only yield short-term impact but sustainable results. SWASH+ direct implementation experience and research suggest that the following are some key elements for impact and sustainability:

Keys to Success

Accountability through Monitoring – School teachers, administrators and pupils must be held accountable for the execution of their respective WASH-related responsibilities. A study of the use of soapy water as a more practical alternative to bar soap in schools suggests that frequent monitoring visits are one of the drivers of WASH success. The study showed a marked increase in the availability of soapy water over a 5-month period punctuated by regular monitoring visits from project staff and a 60% decrease after a 1-year period without monitoring.

Funding – In a 2008 study conducted by SWASH+ of the sustainability of safe water system interventions in 55 pilot schools, only 5 schools were deemed to have met the criteria for

sustainability. All of the 5 schools reported having a budget for WASH that was used to buy water treatment products and soap. This is not the case for most schools. Currently the Kenyan Ministry of Education allocates 10 Kenyan Shillings (0.13 USD) per primary school pupil per year for electricity, water, and sanitation. The amount is insufficient for the maintenance and upkeep of school WASH facilities and consumables such as soap.

Behavior Change – Within and beyond schools, changes in behaviors and cultural attitudes relating to health and hygiene are necessary for successful school WASH interventions. A nationwide study by the European Journal of Tropical Medicine and International Health (2009) found that only 32% of Kenyans wash their hands after faecal contact. SWASH+ focus group discussions with students, pupils and parents reveal serious lack of knowledge and access to information about menstruation, anal cleansing and other aspects of personal hygiene.



Maintenance – SWASH+ follow-up visits to schools that received WASH interventions in 2006 and 2007 reveal problems with maintenance of school WASH hardware. This is not only due to lack of

funds but also because schools do not have easy access to supplies such as replacement taps for water containers and workmen for repair and maintenance of infrastructure. A supply chain analysis conducted for the SWASH+ project concluded that lack of demand for WASH hardware discourages the participation of the private sector while non-standard technology, such as varied latrine designs, further limits access to local maintenance and repair skills. WASH interventions should plan for sustainability by ensuring access to parts and labor, sufficient geographic concentration of interventions to build demand, and standardization of hardware and designs.

SWASH+ is a five-year applied research project to identify, develop, and test innovative approaches to school-based water, sanitation and hygiene in Nyanza Province, Kenya. The partners that form the SWASH+ consortium are CARE, Emory University, the Great Lakes University of Kisumu, the Government of Kenya, and formerly the Kenya Water for Health Organisation (KWAHO), and Water.org. SWASH+ is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Global Water Challenge. For more information, visit www.swashplus.org.

