

# RAISING CLEAN HANDS

Advancing Learning, Health and Participation through WASH in Schools



Joint Call to Action 2010

CARE • Dubai Cares • Emory University Center for Global Safe Water  
IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre • Save the Children  
UNICEF • Water Advocates • WaterAid • Water For People • WHO

## Acknowledgements

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<b>1</b>	Summary: Call to Action for WASH in Schools . . . . .	<b>2</b>
<b>2</b>	About WASH in Schools . . . . .	<b>4</b>
<b>3</b>	WASH in Schools Improves Children’s Health . . . . .	<b>6</b>
<b>4</b>	WASH in Schools Boosts School Attendance and Achievement . . . . .	<b>8</b>
<b>5</b>	WASH in Schools Promotes Gender Equality . . . . .	<b>10</b>
<b>6</b>	WASH in Schools Reaches the Community because Children Are Agents of Change . . . . .	<b>14</b>
<b>7</b>	Six Points of Action for WASH in Schools . . . . .	<b>16</b>

Fulfilling every child's right to water, sanitation and hygiene education remains a major challenge for policymakers, school administrators and communities in many countries. In a group of surveyed developing countries, less than half of primary schools have access to safe water and just over a third have adequate sanitation. Lack of coverage data for WASH in Schools is one barrier to securing the rights of children. Of the 60 developing countries surveyed, only 33 provided data on access to water in primary schools and 25 have data on sanitation.<sup>1</sup>

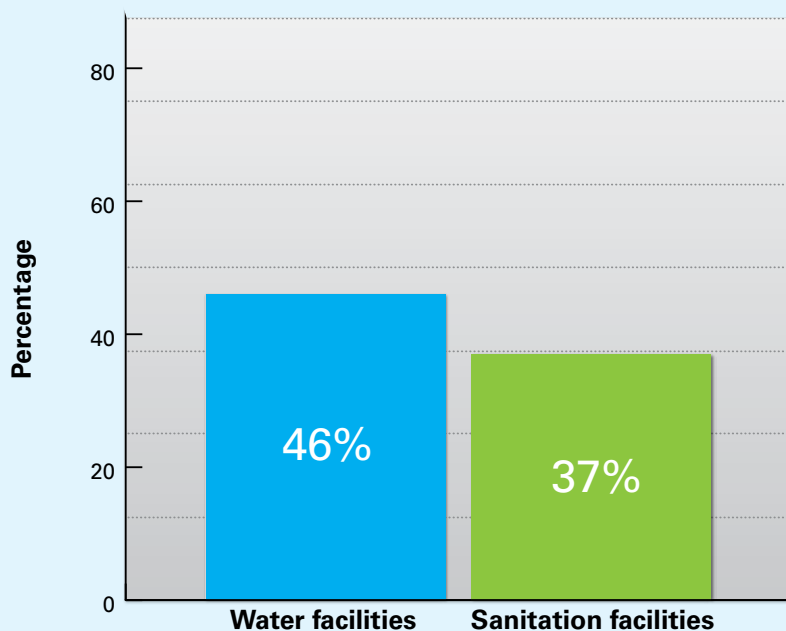
Great strides have been made, nonetheless, to safeguard the well-being of children in schools. Millions of schoolchildren now have access to drinking water, sanitation facilities and hygiene education. And the experience gained over the past decade

can be well applied to sustaining WASH in Schools programmes that improve health, foster learning and enable children to participate as agents of change for their siblings, their parents and the community at large.

As citizens, parents, policymakers and government representatives, we all have a role in making sure that every child receives the benefits of WASH in Schools:

- Clean water for drinking and washing.
- Dignity and safety through ample toilets and washstands, separated for girls and boys.
- Education for good hygiene.
- Healthy school environments through safe waste disposal.

## Access to WASH in Schools Remains a Challenge



**Source:** Extracted from 60 UNICEF country office annual reports, of which only 33 contained information about the proportion of primary schools with adequate water supply and 25 had data on sanitation facilities.

This Call to Action for WASH in Schools is the result of collaboration between CARE, Dubai Cares, Emory University Center for Global Safe Water, IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre, Save the Children, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Water Advocates, WaterAid, Water For People and the World Health Organization (WHO). It calls on decision-makers to increase investments and on concerned stakeholders to plan and act in cooperation – so that all children go to a school with child-friendly water, sanitation and hygiene facilities.

**Because every child deserves to be in a school that offers safe water, healthful sanitation and hygiene education, we call for renewed commitments to:**

1. Increase investment in WASH in Schools, mobilizing resources to secure children's health, now and for generations to follow.
2. Engage those who set policies at the global, national, sub-national and local levels to support WASH in Schools.
3. Involve multiple stakeholders – community members, civil society advocates, media, students, school staff, local and regional authorities, national ministries of education, water and health, non-governmental organizations and public-private partnerships – in the cooperative plans and actions that sustain WASH in Schools.
4. Demonstrate quality WASH in Schools programmes that yield a healthy school environment.
5. Monitor WASH in Schools programmes to ensure accountability and evaluate progress.
6. Contribute evidence that provides a solid base for informed decision-making and effective distribution of funds.

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Water, sanitation and hygiene education in schools – WASH in Schools – provides safe drinking water, improves sanitation facilities and promotes lifelong health. WASH in Schools enhances the well-being of children and their families, and paves the way for new generations of healthy children.

Each year, children lose 272 million school days due to diarrhoea,<sup>2</sup> and an estimated one in three school-aged children in the developing world are infested with intestinal worms.<sup>3</sup> Not only do these illnesses rob children of school attendance and achievement, they are underlying causes of malnutrition and stunting.

WASH in Schools significantly reduces hygiene-related disease,<sup>4</sup> increases student attendance and learning achievement, and contributes to dignity and gender equality. Despite this knowledge, more than half of all primary schools in the developing countries with available data do not have adequate water facilities and nearly two thirds lack adequate sanitation (see chart, page 2). Even where facilities exist, they are often in poor condition.<sup>5</sup>

Among its many benefits:

- WASH in Schools provides healthy, safe and secure school environments that can protect children from health hazards, abuse and exclusion. It helps ensure quality education, because children who are healthy and well nourished can fully participate in schooling and gain its maximum benefits. Quality education, in turn, leads to better health and nutrition outcomes, especially for girls.

- WASH in Schools encourages children's pride in their schools and communities by providing dignity and privacy. It enables children to become agents of change for improving water, sanitation and hygiene practices in their families and communities.
- WASH in Schools is an investment in schoolchildren and the health of future generations. It helps children realize their full potential now and prepares them for healthy living as adults, able to share this legacy when they become parents.

Improved water, sanitation and hygiene education helps fulfil every child's right to health and education. WASH in Schools enjoys widespread recognition for its significant role in achieving the Millennium Development Goals – particularly those related to universal access to primary education, reducing child mortality and increasing gender equality, as well as the targets for improving water and sanitation.

WASH in Schools supports global efforts to make the partners' vision a reality: a world where all children go to school and all schools provide a safe, healthy and comfortable environment where children grow, learn and thrive.



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## WASH IN SCHOOLS INSPIRES FAMILIES: Sierra Leone's School Health Clubs

Only 6 per cent of the rural population in Sierra Leone has access to improved sanitation. This deficit is severe, but communities are finding that working with schoolchildren is one of the best ways to promote good hygiene and sanitation.

Through the School Health Clubs of Port Loko District, for example, children are encouraging their families to build latrines and end open defecation.

As explained by Fatmata, age 12, "We learn about good hygiene through games and sports ... but we also have a serious responsibility – we pass these messages on to our families and friends." Since Fatmata's father died, life for her family has been tough. With nine children to support, her mother had little money to spend on perceived luxuries such as sanitation, and the entire family had to use the surrounding bushes as a latrine.

"I used to be so afraid of going to the toilet, especially because of the snakes," said Fatmata. But the introduction of School-Led Total Sanitation, a new community-based approach to eliminating open defecation, prompted her mother to take action. With help from neighbours, she built a latrine using local materials, and the family uses it on a daily basis. Through the dedication of School Health Club members and their teachers, the majority of families in the surrounding villages now have access to a latrine.

**Source:** 'Quarterly Report: WASH – Sierra Leone', UNICEF, April–June 2009.

WASH in Schools is a first step towards ensuring a healthy physical learning environment. Schools with quality WASH programmes can lessen the spread of disease. One study showed that more than 40 per cent of diarrhoea cases in schoolchildren result from transmission in schools rather than homes.<sup>6</sup> Damage to children's mental and physical development is reduced when the spread of disease is stopped.

## The burden of disease is high among children

Children suffer a disproportionate share of the WASH-related disease burden, particularly in developing countries. Among children under 14, more than 20 per cent of deaths and years lived with disabilities are attributable to unsafe water, inadequate sanitation or insufficient hygiene.<sup>7</sup>

Worms affect an estimated 400 million school-aged children in the developing world.<sup>8</sup> Chronic hookworm infestations are associated with reduced physical growth and impaired intellectual development,<sup>9</sup> and children enduring intense infestations with whipworm miss twice as many school days as their infestation-free peers.<sup>10</sup>

## WASH in Schools is effective

Improving WASH conditions in schools helps prevent infestation with soil-transmitted worms, of which 100 per cent of annual cases worldwide are attributable to inadequate sanitation and hygiene.<sup>11</sup> Deworming services,

supported by hygiene education, help children avoid reinfestation, and water and sanitation facilities prevent children from re-exposure.

Soap makes a difference. Households that have hand-washing soap show a 53 per cent lower incidence of diarrhoea among children under 15 years old.<sup>12</sup> When hand washing is practised in facilities such as day-care centres and primary schools, studies show a 30 per cent reduction in diarrhoea cases.<sup>13</sup> Washing hands with soap could reduce acute respiratory infections – including pneumonia, which kills more children than AIDS, malaria and measles combined<sup>14</sup> – by 25 per cent.<sup>15</sup>

Because safe water, improved sanitation and good hygiene practices are so directly linked to better health, reducing the disease burden through WASH in Schools also cuts corresponding costs in health programmes. But healthy behaviour must be supported by facilities and supplies.

Toilets and washstands, for example, need to be customized to fit children's smaller size, and WASH facilities that are traditionally designed for the 'average' child must consider the fact that children have a wide range of abilities and needs. The additional cost of accessible facilities can be minimal if they are planned from the outset. WASH in Schools raises awareness about inclusive education and seeks to enhance accessibility of child-friendly facilities and services – bringing the large numbers of children with disabilities who are often excluded into the school community.



Good hand-washing practices also need to be supported with adequate supplies of soap, an issue that needs to be addressed in many schools:

- A study in Kenya revealed that less than 2 per cent of children in schools washed their hands with soap, which was available in less than 5 per cent of facilities.<sup>16</sup>
- An evaluation conducted in India showed that hand washing before eating in school was far more frequent in districts with WASH in Schools programmes than in control districts. But soap was used by only 2 per cent or less of children when washing their hands, severely cutting its effectiveness.<sup>17</sup>
- The evaluation of School Sanitation and Hygiene Education pilot programmes in six countries – Burkina Faso, Colombia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Viet Nam and Zambia – revealed that the availability of soap was a major problem in most of the schools. Reasons include high costs and the fear that it will be stolen. The lack of soap was jeopardizing the educational effort to promote use and resulted in a low proportion of students washing their hands with soap.<sup>18</sup>

Where schools are having trouble keeping soap on hand, school administrators have provided creative solutions, such as liquid soap, soap bars attached to a rope and washcloth, and TippyTaps, large containers of soapy water that dispense just enough liquid for a single proper hand washing. In other cases, WASH in Schools has generated material support from national ministry and local government budget allocations, in addition to contributions from local communities.



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## WASH in Schools receives support in India, from students to a Minister of Education

In Rajasthan, India, the state government and UNICEF have pooled resources to turn hand washing into a people's campaign to enhance awareness and change behaviour as a sustainable practice. For Global Handwashing Day 2009, members of the school cabinet demonstrated *Saf Hathon Ka Jadoo*, 'the magic of clean hands', by explaining that 'clean hands' means washing with soap.

The schoolchildren appealed to Education Minister Master Bhanwarlal Meghwal to make a regular provision of soap in the school. The Minister warmly responded to the children's requests and reminded officials present to streamline the process of procuring funds for the School Development and Management Committee. He also requested that the *sarpanch* (village head) and the community ensure availability of soap in every school.

**Source:** UNICEF India, 'Rajasthan Pledges To Save Lives by Washing Hands', Jaipur, Rajasthan, India, 2 November 2009, [www.unicef.org/india/wes\\_5906.htm2](http://www.unicef.org/india/wes_5906.htm2).

# 4

## WASH in Schools Boosts School Attendance and Achievement

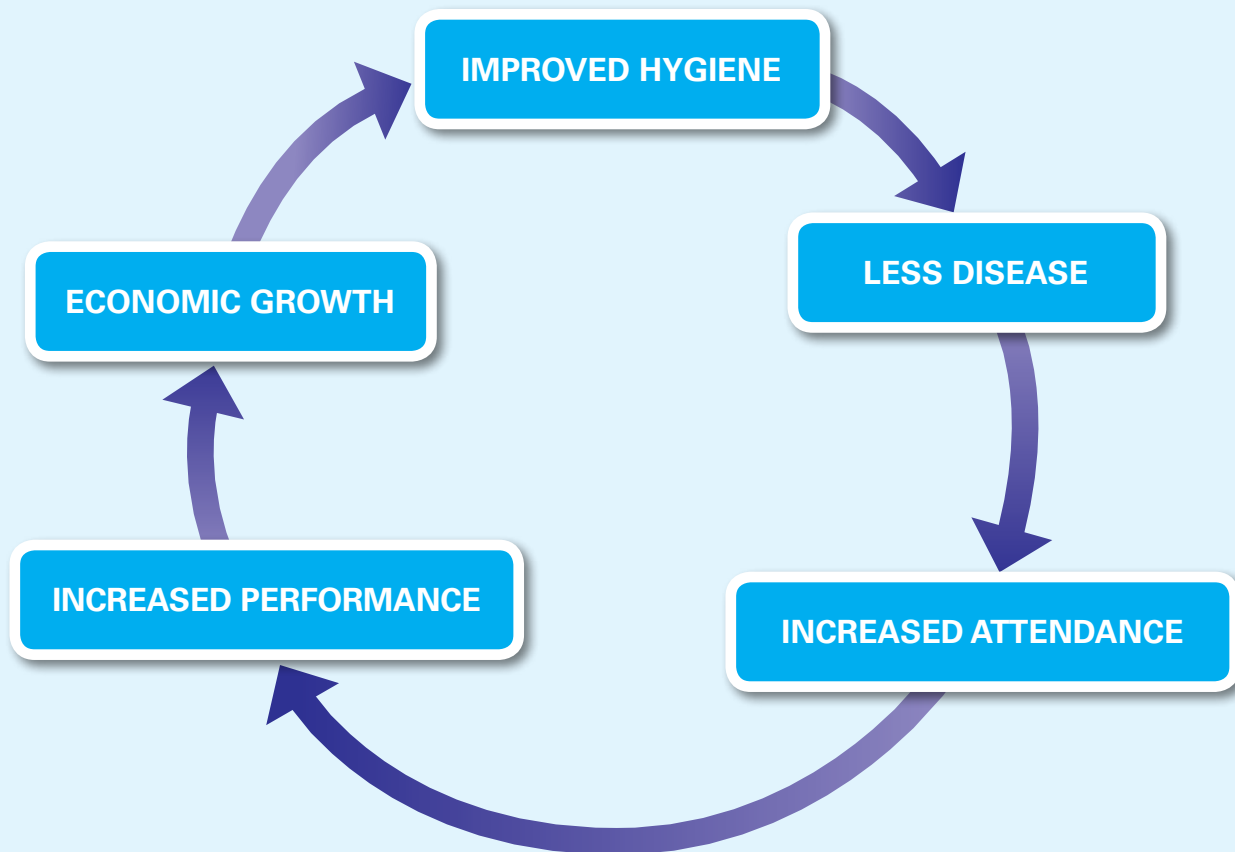
Education and health work in synergy. Nutrition deficiencies, diarrhoea and worm infestations are all related to inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene – and all affect school participation and learning.

Adequate supplies of safe water, located near homes and schools, boost school attendance. Project evaluations and research found a 15 per cent increase in attendance in Bangladesh when water was available within a 15-minute walk compared to one hour or more. Similarly, a study in the United Republic of Tanzania shows a 12 per cent increase in school attendance when water is available within a 15-minute walk.<sup>19</sup>

A programme in Chinese primary schools to promote hand washing by the continuous provision of soap and selection of a 'student hand-washing champion' resulted in healthier children who had 54 per cent fewer days of absence.<sup>20</sup> Children in primary schools in Bogotá who reported proper hand-washing behaviours in school facilities were 20 per cent less likely to report absenteeism than those in schools without good hygiene practices.<sup>21</sup>

Failing to curb infestations such as worms, however, threatens children's cognitive development and allows a recurrent cycle of missed school, poorer school performance and increased poverty.

### Opportunities through WASH in Schools



## Safeguarding cognitive development

In the developing world, an estimated 47 per cent of children 5–9 years old are infested with three main types of soil-transmitted worms: hookworm, roundworm or whipworm.<sup>22</sup> The most significant risk of hookworm infestation is anaemia. In children, anaemia can lead to developmental and behavioural disturbances that can diminish their ability to learn.

The average IQ loss per worm infestation is 3.75 points, representing 633 million IQ points lost for the people who live in the world's low-income countries.<sup>23</sup>

A recent randomized impact evaluation of a deworming programme in western Kenya demonstrates that the worm burden in children contributed to 25 per cent of overall school absenteeism rates.<sup>24</sup> The total time for schooling lost to worm-associated absenteeism amounts to more than 200 million years; almost all this loss occurs in low- and middle-income countries.<sup>25</sup>

Safe water, sanitation and hygiene are major factors in protecting children from worm infestations and other illnesses. The evidence is clear that WASH in Schools can have a positive impact on enrolment levels, ratios of girls to boys attending school, quality of education and achievement. By providing access to WASH facilities and encouraging behaviour change with the participation of children, the burden of disease can be lifted – and children's opportunities expand.



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## WASH IN SCHOOLS IMPROVES HYGIENE BEHAVIOURS AND HEALTH: Child-to-child in Tajikistan

In Tajikistan, more than 40,000 children in 100 schools benefited from child-to-child peer education, specialized hygiene education materials, the provision of hand-washing stands, and the construction of latrines between 2006 and 2008.

Baseline and end-line surveys with a comparison group showed large improvements in key behaviours due to the programme. Hand washing after toilet use increased from 12 per cent to 94 per cent. Observation showed that the percentage of households that had soap near the toilet increased from 11 per cent to 86 per cent.

Diarrhoea rates were reduced from 37 per cent to 11 per cent, and pinworm prevalence cut from 35 per cent to 17 per cent.

**Source:** 'Case Study: School WASH improves hygiene behaviors and health', Save the Children USA, 2009.

As in other parts of society, gender discrimination is prevalent within schools. In many cases, this discrimination is related to cultural beliefs and traditions; sometimes, it is caused by unrecognized problems and needs.

Girls are particularly vulnerable to dropping out of school, partly because many are reluctant to continue their schooling when toilet and washing facilities are not private, not safe or simply not available. When schools have

adequate facilities – particularly toilets and washstands that facilitate menstrual hygiene – a major obstacle to attendance is removed.

Primary barriers for girl's attendance to school include:

- *Inappropriate hygiene facilities.* Girls who have reached puberty and female school staff who are menstruating need gender-related privacy. If no privacy is provided, students may not

**Creating school environments that encourage girls to complete their education has far-reaching implications for women's health and a nation's economy.**



use the facilities at schools, resulting in absenteeism rates that can reach 10–20 per cent of school time.<sup>26</sup>

- *Sexual harassment in toilets.* A survey conducted in South Africa reveals that more than 30 per cent of the girls attending school had been raped at school.<sup>27</sup> Many of the rapes occurred in school toilets, particularly those that are isolated from the protective environment of the school.
- *Students, teachers and school administrators lack knowledge about adolescents' physical changes.* Schools have an important role in enabling open discussions where children feel free to talk about issues such as menstruation. Because many children start school late and repeat grades, adolescence begins when they are still in lower primary school. Therefore, this type of education should be age-oriented rather than determined by grade level.
- *Girls do more sanitation- and water-related chores than boys.* Fetching water for household and school use puts an additional burden on adolescent girls and enforces the belief that it is typically a woman's task.

### Improved WASH conditions empower girls to attend school

WASH in Schools fosters social inclusion and individual self-respect. By offering an alternative to the stigma and marginalization associated with the issues mentioned above, it empowers all students – and especially encourages girls and female teachers.

In Alwar District, India, the school sanitation programme increased girls' enrolment by one third, leading to a 25 per cent improvement in academic performance for both boys and girls.<sup>28</sup> A WASH in Schools evaluation in Kenya indicates that girls were absent less in schools where there was more hand washing and very high toilet use.<sup>29</sup>

In Bangladesh and India, innovative projects have demonstrated that menstrual hygiene can be incorporated into broader WASH in Schools interventions. Training and information for peer groups of children and female teachers have shown how women and girls can be empowered through improved menstrual hygiene management. Creating school environments that encourage girls to complete their education has far-reaching implications for women's health and a nation's economy.

Girls who can take advantage of opportunities for education are better able to protect themselves from exploitation and AIDS, and more likely to develop skills to contribute to their societies.<sup>30</sup> If they become mothers, they are more likely to raise healthy, well-nourished, educated children.

Women who have been to school are less likely to die during childbirth; each additional year of education is estimated to prevent two maternal deaths for every 1,000 women.<sup>31</sup> Research also shows that for every 10 per cent increase in female literacy, a country's economy can grow by 0.3 per cent.<sup>32</sup>



© Matt Freeman of Emory University Center for Global Safe Water

## **WASH must be sustained in schools during emergencies**

During emergencies, schools are often the place where displaced people seek shelter. Although it is essential that schools are able to provide safe havens for communities, this can both displace children from their education and overload/damage WASH facilities. Preparedness measures, including installation and repair of permanent school facilities, need to be accompanied by plans to provide additional, temporary WASH facilities in schools so a surge of population can be accommodated for the crisis period. Subsequently, repairs must be made once populations have left. Temporary learning spaces in camps or other locations outside of schools also need to be supported with temporary WASH facilities.

## **Point-of-use water treatment reaches communities through schools**

An increasing body of evidence shows that water quality interventions have a greater impact on reducing sickness and death from diarrhoea than previously thought, particularly when

interventions are applied at the point of use, such as schools and households, and combined with improved water handling and storage.

In Cambodia, a study of ceramic-filter use showed the filters removed bacteria contaminants effectively for at least three to four years. Costing less than \$10 each, these easy-to-use filters can be built and installed using locally available materials. The filters are introduced in schools, using catchy music videos and puppet shows to teach good hygiene practices.

Schoolteachers act as distributors, selling the filters in their communities and earning extra income. Michael Sampson, founder of the non-profit organization Resource Development International, explained that “filter ownership empowers the Cambodians to solve their own problems – helping themselves and building their self-esteem.” More than 100,000 Cambodian households now use the filters.

**Sources:** *UNICEF Handbook on Water Quality*, New York, 2008; and [www.america.gov](http://www.america.gov), ‘Ceramic Filters for Drinking Water Improving Health in Cambodia’, U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC, 21 October 2008.



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## Communities support WASH in Schools: Mothers take action in Central America

'School Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Plus Community Impact' (SWASH+) is a programme that trains members of rural parent-teacher associations (PTAs) to manage WASH in Schools funds in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Participating PTAs contract skilled labour, purchase materials and supervise construction projects, including restroom facilities and hand-washing stations.

SWASH+ puts women in charge of local development, and their response reflects a new sense of accomplishment. "Seven PTA members in our community received training on how to manage funds, and we learned a lot," said Sara Gonzalez, a PTA president in Honduras. "The students have functioning restrooms and a hand-washing station, and now we are considering doing a small project to repair the roof of the school on our own."

**Source:** 'Empowering PTAs in Honduras', Water For People, 28 September 2009.

## WASH in faith-related schooling

"Good sanitation and hygiene habits and the protection of environment are values common to all faiths. So are many of the values developed in the life-skills and value-based education approaches. With globally about 64% of schools being faith-related, there are unique opportunities and benefits from linking spiritual learning with learning on water, sanitation, hygiene and the environment, and the improvement of water and sanitation facilities in schools. Materials on designs, strategies, approaches and results are widely available ... what remains is their adjustment and use in faith-based education and the development of school water, sanitation and hygiene education programmes as part of the education systems of individual faiths." – Annemarieke Mooijman and Christine Sijbesma, 'Faith in Water: Water supply, sanitation and hygiene facilities and related education in faith-based schools', IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre, 2009.

Forty per cent of the global population – some 2.65 billion people – live without access to proper toilet facilities, and 883 million don't have access to safe water.<sup>33</sup> More than 4,000 children under age five die from diarrhoea every day. This is a global crisis, and WASH in Schools can help.

WASH in and through schools is one of the best routes to reach entire communities. Directed engagement with students can lead to community adoption of good WASH behaviours and technologies<sup>34</sup> as well as improved health.<sup>35</sup> Because children are agents of change, education for good hygiene practices in schools links students, families and communities:

- Children are fast learners. Compared to adults, children can more easily change their behaviour or develop new long-term behaviours as a result of increased knowledge and facilitated practices. Children and youth may question existing practices in their

households, and by demonstrating good hygiene, they become agents of change within their families and communities.

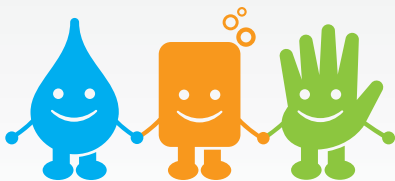
- Children are role models. What they learn at school is likely to be passed on to their peers and to their own children if they become parents.
- Teachers are influential. When supported by school management, they have an important role in developing students' capacities to become community role models.

## Children can lead change in communities

School-Led Total Sanitation, a community-based approach to eliminating open defecation, capitalizes on the crucial role that children can play as promoters of sanitation and hygiene in their communities.

A programme implemented in 2005 by the Government of Nepal and UNICEF draws on a wide range of successful Community Approaches to Total Sanitation. The Nepalese initiative created a complete package of sanitation and hygiene programming that begins at the school and extends throughout the community.

Children are central in catalysing improved sanitation in schools, homes and communities. Through participatory approaches, motivational tools, flexibility for innovation and building ownership at the local level, School-Led Total Sanitation is accelerating latrine coverage across Nepal – and creating a social movement for communities to become free of open defecation. As of June 2009, School-Led Total Sanitation reached approximately 90,000 households and 500,000 people in 15 districts through 300 schools. More than 1,000 settlements in 10 districts in Nepal have been declared open-defecation free.



## Global Handwashing Day

Global Handwashing Day, first celebrated in 2008, provides an opportunity for schoolchildren to reach out to their communities with the life-saving message of hand washing with soap.

On 15 October each year, playgrounds, classrooms, community centres and public spaces are filled with activities to encourage hand-washing behaviour change. In 2009, close to 200 million children participated in these celebrations in 80 countries across all five continents.





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Based on this success, School-Led Total Sanitation was incorporated in the 2009 Nepal Sanitation Master Plan, and the Government is replicating the programme in all 75 districts. Countries including Pakistan and Sierra Leone have also adopted this approach.<sup>36</sup>

Children's involvement with WASH in their communities can be promoted with a minimum investment through such activities as environmental health clubs, drama groups and student focus groups. One example of this is the experience of Malawi's Safe Water Clubs.

In 2007, Safe Water Clubs were launched in 11 schools in Neno District, Malawi, reaching about 5,500 students. The Safe Water Clubs promote the importance of clean water, good hygiene and improved sanitation. Club members create their own songs, dramas and games to communicate safe water and hygiene messages within their schools and communities.

Since the programme began, there has been a 90 per cent reduction in absenteeism due to diarrhoeal disease in the participating schools, even during the peak of the rainy season. As a result of the students bringing the safe water message to their homes and families, the community clinic reported a 35 per cent decrease in diarrhoeal disease cases in 2007.<sup>37</sup>

## WASH IN SCHOOLS IS CREATIVE: Schoolchildren in Indonesia bring a message to the community

In a project called 'Dokter Kecil', or Little Doctors, primary-school clubs for Grade 4–6 students promote good hygiene through community theatre and other interactive events. To convey lessons on the importance of washing hands with soap before preparing food or eating and after using the toilet, the children produce plays for their parents and other community members.

The students also take charge of Jum'at Bersih (Clean Friday), a national movement that began in 1994 and encourages hygiene promotion, particularly hand washing with soap, during meetings on Islam's holy day.

The 'little doctors' are becoming leaders, learning to communicate clearly and effectively, analyse and solve problems, and negotiate solutions. "People love drama, and parents especially love to see their children perform," said one supervising teacher. "It is far more effective than telling people directly to change the way they do things."

Source: UNICEF Indonesia.



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The goal of the partners – including CARE, Dubai Cares, Emory University Center for Global Safe Water, IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre, Save the Children, UNICEF, Water Advocates, WaterAid, Water For People and WHO – is to ensure that all schools provide hygiene education programmes and have adequate, child-friendly water and sanitation facilities.

Current and future generations of children must grow up with safe water and good sanitation in their schools and communities. Children carrying messages about the importance of conserving water, washing hands with soap and using a clean toilet at home will help their siblings and parents have a better life.

We have proof of the impact of WASH in Schools. We have guidelines on the essential components and best practices. We know how to make WASH in Schools interventions better and more sustainable.

Because every child deserves WASH in Schools, we are calling for renewed commitments to:

- 1. Increase investment in WASH in Schools**, mobilizing resources to secure children's health, now and for generations to follow.
- 2. Engage those who set policies** at the global, national, sub-national and local levels to support WASH in Schools. Widespread communication and advocacy will be vital to establishing

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national plans of action and bringing all stakeholders from the health, education, WASH, nutrition and food security sectors to act together to fulfil the promise of water, sanitation and hygiene in schools.

### 3. Involve multiple stakeholders –

community members, civil society advocates, media, students, school staff, local and regional authorities, national ministries of education, water and health, non-governmental organizations and public-private partnerships – in the cooperative plans and actions that sustain WASH in Schools.

### 4. Demonstrate quality WASH in Schools projects

that yield a healthy school environment. Sustainable programmes enhance children’s capacities to learn and achieve. These programmes

incorporate construction, maintenance or rehabilitation of child-friendly water and sanitation facilities, hygiene education to change behaviour, and participation of students, teachers, administrators and the neighbouring community.

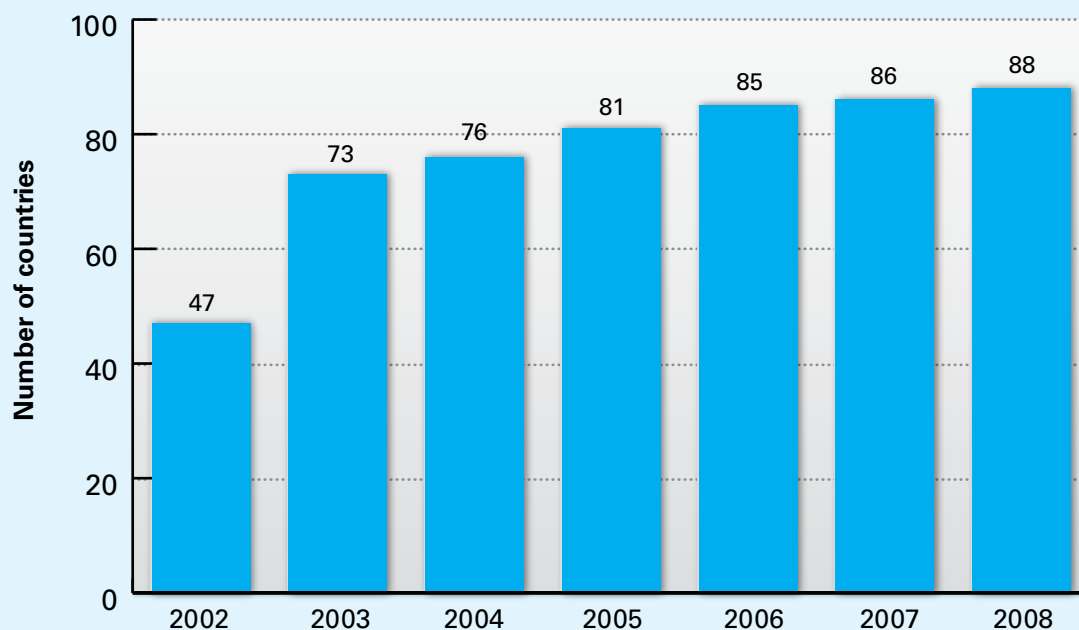
### 5. Monitor WASH in Schools programmes

to ensure accountability and evaluate progress. The global goals for WASH in Schools will not be reached unless programme coverage is included in existing national and global data-collection systems, such as Education Management Information Systems, and mapped out on a continuous basis.

### 6. Contribute evidence

that provides a solid base for informed decision-making and effective distribution of funds. Gathering

## WASH in Schools a Priority for Development Agencies



The number of UNICEF-supported countries implementing WASH in Schools programmes has nearly doubled since 2002.

Source: Extracted from UNICEF Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Annual Report 2008, New York, 2009, p. 23.



and sharing comprehensive data, disaggregated by gender, access and quality of services, will equip policymakers with indispensable tools and provide project participants with invaluable guidance.

### Maintain the momentum

The number of countries that incorporate hygiene education in their national curricula or have developed national plans to provide water, sanitation and hygiene education to all primary schools is steadily increasing. In a survey conducted in 2008 among 60 developing countries, 27 had created and approved plans to provide WASH in all primary schools and an additional 19 were working on national plans.<sup>38</sup>

This is a call to immediate action, renewed commitment and increased investment in WASH in Schools, with the vital goal of increasing access to improved services throughout the world. Urgent action is needed to protect all children, help them survive, be healthy, participate fully in opportunities for education, contribute to the development of nations and break the cycle of poverty.

It is the right of every child to be healthy and learn with dignity. Every child has a right to WASH in Schools.

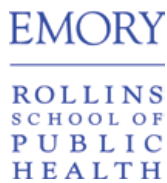
In partnership with those who are dedicated to the health and education of children, we are committed to an ambitious but imperative vision: every child goes to a school that provides safe water, good sanitation and hygiene education – a school where they can learn, play and grow.

- 1 United Nations Children's Fund country office annual reports, 2008.
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# Join us in Raising Clean Hands for WASH in Schools

The following are partners in the initiative as of February 2010. To join us in raising clean hands for WASH in Schools, please contact Murat Sahin, UNICEF adviser for WASH in Schools, at [msahin@unicef.org](mailto:msahin@unicef.org).



water advocates



**Ensure every child goes to a school with WASH – water, sanitation and hygiene education.** Despite widespread knowledge of the relationship between poor WASH quality and the burden of disease on children, many countries have inadequately addressed water and sanitation facilities in their schools. Policymakers as well as school administrators have been unable to devote adequate attention to WASH in Schools programmes, and as a result, schools either do not have WASH facilities or they are in poor condition due to lack of maintenance.

This Call to Action for WASH in Schools puts forward a six-point plan towards providing each and every schoolchild with access to quality water, child-friendly sanitation and hygiene facilities, and hygiene education for lifelong health.



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### DID YOU KNOW?

Lack of reliable data is a major constraint for the advocacy and planning efforts of WASH in Schools programmes. Water and sanitation facilities and skills-based hygiene promotion activities are not effectively monitored at the global or national level. The data that are available show that:

- If the Millennium Development Goals for water and sanitation are reached, it is estimated that absenteeism in schools would be reduced by 272 million school days per year.
- Fewer than half of primary schools have adequate water facilities, and nearly two thirds lack adequate sanitation facilities in a survey conducted among 60 developing countries where data are available.
- A girl can miss up to 10 per cent of her school days during menstruation, a loss that could be averted through WASH in Schools programming.
- Only 27 out of 60 developing countries surveyed have a national plan of action that provides space for WASH in Schools.