



School WASH in Tanzania

Improving WASH in Schools: Improving the Quality of Education

School WASH - an important pre-requisite for ensuring the right to basic education

More children than ever before are attending school in Tanzania as a result of a number of successful policy initiatives, most notably the abolition of school fees in 2002. The number of primary schools increased from 11,873 in 2001 to 14,700 in 2006. Whilst the number of latrines has been increasing over this time, the resources required to keep pace with this enrolment are significant as it has led to a need for more than 240,000 additional drop holes in schools across Tanzania.

School water, sanitation and hygiene contribute to children's learning and school experiences in many ways, it: improves cognitive function and attention; reduces days missed from school; provides more time on the learning task; and increases dignity and safety. Because of inadequate school WASH many children are therefore currently not meeting their learning potential .

School WASH—key to keeping girls in schools

Despite the success in increasing enrolment, drop out rates remain high and completion rates remain low. There is an urgent need to focus on providing quality education and retaining pupils, especially girls.



Photo: SNV/Geodata

The reasons for poor retention are many but international research suggests that inadequate water supply, sanitation and hygiene play a role. A recent report estimates that in Sub-Saharan Africa half of all girls who drop out of school say that a lack of adequate water and sanitation facilities are a contributing factor. A further 10 per cent of school-age girls who have reached the age of puberty do not attend school during menstruation (Tearfund, 2008).

School WASH—fulfilling the Government of Tanzania's commitment to education

- MKUKUTA II recognises that quality education requires improvements in physical infrastructure, teaching and learning materials, human resources and school governance.
- Rehabilitating, maintaining and expanding school WASH infrastructure – water supply, latrine and hand-washing facilities – needs to be a priority for the new Government of Tanzania to ensure universal access to quality pre-primary, primary, and lower secondary education.
- Improving school water supply, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) would improve the lives of almost 10 million children and young people in Tanzania.



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Many schools in Tanzania fail to provide the children with their basic human rights - a clean and healthy learning environment

A mapping of school WASH in every school in 16 districts (2,697 schools) carried out jointly by SNV, WaterAid and UNICEF shows that the provision of water, sanitation and hygiene in pre-, primary and secondary schools in Tanzania is lamentable. International WHO guidelines recommend the availability of clean water, and the provision of one toilet per 25 girls and one toilet plus one urinal per 50 boys (WHO, 2006). In reality, it is not uncommon to find hundreds of children sharing one decrepit latrine, irregular water supply and no hand washing facilities.

The school WASH mapping research showed that:

- Only 11% of schools surveyed meet the MOEVT “minimum” standards of 20 girls and 25 boys per drop hole.
- 20% of schools have more than 100 pupils per drop hole and 6% of schools have no latrines at all.
- The facilities that exist are frequently a barrier to those children most in need of an education. 96% of schools do not have facilities that are suitable or accessible to children with disabilities.
- 52% of girls latrines did not have doors providing dignity and privacy.

Hand washing with soap is among the most effective and inexpensive ways to prevent diarrhea diseases and pneumonia.

Yet, despite its lifesaving potential:

- 92% of schools did not have functional hand-washing facilities with water and 99% did not have soap
- 62% of schools in these districts reported having access to piped or another protected water supply though this isn't regular or sufficient quantity.



Photo: SNV/Geodata

There is a chronic lack of financial and human resources and commitment to construction of latrines and hand-washing

In districts with a high coverage of water supply in schools, they still have very low levels of functioning hand-washing facilities (90 per cent of schools in Siha have piped water supply, but 92 per cent have no hand-washing facilities, even a standpipe). This indicates that it is as much an issue of priority rather than just a lack of resources.

In addition, sixty per cent of teachers also reported that they have not been trained in providing hygiene education, the result of which is that many children may not have access to quality hygiene education which would help them to lead healthy and productive lives.

In 2008, Capitation Grant and Development Grant transferred to primary schools accounted for 6,436 TSh per student (5.1 USD per student). Only a few schools reported to be allocating some of these funds to buying soap or cleaning materials.

The capitation grant is clearly inadequate to respond to the development costs associated with providing water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion (the cost of bringing an average school up to a reasonable standard of WASH estimated at approximately USD 50/pupil).



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The benefits of improved school WASH are multiple

There is evidence that water supply, sanitation and hygiene in schools lead to:

- **Increased cognitive function and attention**—due to improved nutrition and reduced health problems; this includes for girls, who may become dehydrated due to drinking less than needed because of concern over where to go to the toilet, and due to poor hygiene during menstruation.
- **Reduced days missed from school**—due to reduced WASH related diseases such as diarrhea, worms, schistosomiasis, or urinary tract infections, or lack of adequate facilities to deal with girls' hygiene needs including during menstruation.
- **More time on the learning task**—due to access to safe water and sanitation on site. Schools which lack access to water often require children to carry water long distances to school, thereby reducing actual class teaching time and /or exhausting the children so that their learning is impeded.
- **Increased dignity and safety particularly for girls and for people with disabilities**—due to appropriate design and construction, appropriately sited latrines segregated by sex, including increased privacy and reduced risk of sexual harassment.
- **More effective school feeding programmes**—due to better hygiene, access to clean drinking water, and resultant increased nutritional benefit.



Photo: SNV/Le Huong

Establishing the foundations for improving school WASH at scale across Tanzania

Efforts to improve water supply, sanitation and hygiene have been piecemeal and on a small scale. However, there is growing momentum and a desire to see change.

Inter-sectoral cooperation and progress at the policy level are being made:

- Some progress has been made with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between 4 key ministries - the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT), the Prime Minister's Office for Regional and Local Government (PMO-RALG), the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW) and the Ministry of Water and Irrigation (MoWI).
- National Technical Working Group for school WASH (SWASH-TWG) is also in the process of being established to be co-chaired by MOEVT & MOHSW.
- A national school WASH strategy is in final draft.
- The four Ministries of the Government of Tanzania have also developed, and are about to pilot, guidelines for school water supply sanitation and hygiene with technical support from SNV, WaterAid and UNICEF, two Tanzanian Universities (ARU and MUHAS) and a wide range of civil society organisations.



Photo: UNICEF/Pirozzi



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Recommendations for the next steps

1. Get the National Technical Working Group for School WASH to be up and running to have a regular coordination mechanism between the four Ministries and other partners.
2. Establish a national financing and management structure or programme to be able to manage improved SWASH implementation at scale.
3. Increase funding significantly to support a national programme on school WASH at scale:
 - Government of Tanzania to increase its annual budget for school WASH;
 - Development partners to support a national school WASH programme with significant funds.
4. Identify high level political champions to support the efforts for ensuring a minimum level of school WASH in every school in Tanzania.
5. Ensure all new schools must be built with complete SWASH facilities.
6. Support the roll out capacity building for school management and Local Government Authorities in every district across Tanzania in order to raise awareness of the critical nature of school WASH, to assess the needs and to implement the new SWASH guidelines in a number of schools.
7. Develop a significant and sustained national and local campaign for hand-washing in all schools in Tanzania. This would have a significant impact on the health and productivity of Tanzania's children and young adults.



Photo: UNICEF/Julie Pudlowski

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