



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



Boosting Incentives, Administrative Capacity and Prioritization Related to School WASH: A Governance Trial

Background

Building on extensive research in schools in Nyanza Province, Kenya, from 2006 to 2012, the SWASH+ Project is testing innovative ways of improving school WASH governance. In this trial, we examine alternative strategies to improve the sustainable provision of WASH services in 360 primary schools in Nyeri, Kisumu and Kilifi. In practice this means ensuring that sanitation facilities are cleaned on a regular basis, are supplied with necessary inputs (such as tissue, clean water, and soap), and are used appropriately by students and teachers alike. Our approach is to take the current envelope of resources as fixed. Even if we believe that this envelope is inadequate and should be expanded, our research will focus on how to get the most out of the resources currently available.

To frame ideas, we categorize a number of possible WASH interventions according to three underlying sources of market and/or administrative failure:

- low prioritization of WASH services by school decision makers and parents;
- lack of administrative capacity at the school level; and,
- weak incentives of decision makers to provide sustainable WASH services, or of parents and others to monitor and encourage such provision.

Research

(i) Interventions to prioritize WASH

WASH services might not be provided at a sufficient level if stakeholders – teachers, school administrators, school management committee (SMC) members, other parents, and students – do not value them. If we believe that with better information about the benefits of WASH services the valuation expressed by some or all of these players would increase, interventions aimed at providing this information and making it salient could be useful in sustaining services of higher

quality. We use calendars provided to parents and teachers to deliver information to prioritize WASH in schools.

In the calendars, we draw on information on the link between WASH inputs and health and education outcomes from recent studies including the SWASH+ Phase I trials in Nyanza. For example, lessons learned from Phase I regarding the links between sanitation and hygiene on the one hand and school attendance on the other hand, are presented to stakeholders. In addition, we include information on strategies that stakeholders can use to ensure good WASH regimes in their schools. This includes information about roles and responsibilities and sanitation standards, as well as imperatives to talk to head teachers and school management. Finally, and following on WASH United's Champions pledge campaign, the calendars provide an opportunity for the parents to pledge to

be WASH champions in their school. A WASH champion monitors the children's WASH environment and advocates on their behalf with school management. To sustain engagement, each calendar month of the school term has a pledge note that is torn off, signed and taken to school by the child. To incentivize the pledging component, we have created a within-school competition in which the winning team is publicly recognized during the first assembly of the following month.

(ii) Interventions to improve coordination and sustainability

The benefits of WASH services might be well understood by all relevant stakeholders, but if delivering them requires coordinated decisions and actions by a number of actors, then coordination/commitment failures could result in under-provision. Even without such problems, day-to-day imperatives could lead to resources being inadvertently diverted to other uses. In this trial we examine the impacts of addressing some of these challenges



by providing a regular nudge to school managers to keep WASH at top of the mind. This consists of sending weekly reminder SMS messages to head teachers and members of the School Management Committee (SMC)

Who: Decision makers – head teachers and SMC members

Content: Reminders to SMC members to maintain quality of sanitation services, to provide necessary inputs, and to dedicate resources to the task. Also, reminders about the importance of sanitation.

Frequency and timing: Weekly, at random times

(iii) Monitoring school performance and providing incentives

Even when knowledge is adequate to ensure WASH services have high priority and effective management is in place to implement school-level decisions, those responsible for delivering services might not perform. Under performance could stem from lack of incentives to exert costly effort or outright corruption (using WASH funds for personal use).



We examine a variety of mechanisms through which performance incentives can be provided to those responsible for delivering WASH services. We have adopted two models:

Implicit incentives – effected through peer-group pressure or public sanction; and,

Explicit incentives –in-kind rewards for good performance – recognition certificate.

We also examine the impact of administrative versus crowd sourced information used in determining performance.

- Arm 1 – Stakeholder-generated information:
 - Information generation
 - Parent-generated information on sanitation quality
 - Each week, study team sends parents an SMS asking a specific question about the quality of school sanitation, – e.g., “Was there soap available at the school latrines today?”, or “Was your child’s latrine clean today?”
 - The parents respond by texting either a “Yes/No” response.
 - Parent responses are aggregated over

each month, to get a monthly score.

- Dissemination: Public
 - All stakeholders in the group receive a text each month with a list of schools in the group and their star rating, in order from highest to lowest (based on numerical score rank).
- Arm 2 – Public Administration:
 - Information generation
 - Enumerator-generated information on sanitation quality
 - Information collected converted to a score out of 5.
 - Dissemination: Public
 - Performance shared with all stakeholders in the group as in Arm 1.
- Arm 3 – Private Administration:
 - Information generation
 - Same as in Arm 2.
 - Reward: Certificate
 - Same as in Arms 1 and 2.
 - Dissemination: Private
 - Performance shared *only* with stakeholders in the particular school.

Findings

The first round of results of the governance trial are expected by the end of 2015

About SWASH+

Creating effective and long-lasting solutions for school water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services is the mission of the SWASH+ Project. Funded by The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the project is a partnership of CARE, Emory University, Georgetown University and the Government of Kenya. SWASH+ uses an action-research approach for testing innovations that can be brought to scale for the good of Kenya’s school children. Extensive documentation of research from Phase I of SWASH+ is available at www.swashplus.org.

