

IMPROVING QUALITY EDUCATION THROUGH GOOD WASH¹ PRACTICES IN KAPCHORWA DISTRICT

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Country: Uganda

Sector: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

CHALLENGE

Constraint: The Uganda national water coverage presently stands at 65%², functionality at 83% and the sanitation coverage is 68%, all below MDG goals. The situation is particularly serious in schools where the infrastructure is inadequate with a pupil latrine ratio of up to 1:150, no hand washing facilities and limited evidence of support to girl child, among others. The situation is not significantly different in Kapchorwa District one of the clients SNV is supporting whose water coverage stands at 68% with 87% of existing water sources functional and challenging operation and maintenance systems. The sanitation coverage is a low 58% notwithstanding that some of the latrines do not really qualify to be called so. In a recent study it was found out that some schools have a latrine to pupil stance ratio that is above 1:150³.

Consequences:

As a result, 75%⁴ of the disease burden in the country has been attributed to the poor water supply, sanitation and hygiene practices. The biggest victims are always the children and women in communities. Poor WASH practices have also contributed to lack of a conducive school environment, causing poor staff motivation, drop outs, low enrollment, poor attendance and consequently poor performance. The girl child is especially affected more than the rest due to the special hygiene needs that are involved in supporting her

Root-causes:

This study found out that there was a general lack of capacity at the district to address the school WASH problems. This coupled with poor coordination and limited knowledge on roles and responsibilities at school and community level aggravated the problem. Poor attitude to ownership of facilities by both the community and schools led to inadequate care for the water sources while poor collaboration of stakeholders often led to conflict of ownership and usage. Absence of a systematic approach towards addressing WASH issues in schools led to poor focus and hence low impact in addressing the sanitation and hygiene challenges at both schools and households.

Challenge:

While guidelines and policies on WASH in schools existed, the reality on the ground was different. The state of WASH in schools was bad indeed. A system study was needed in order to design and implement capacity development support aimed at improving performances of both the district and school structures in addressing WASH issues in Kapchorwa District. There was need to increase focus on WASH, improve planning and implementation ensuring that each stakeholder effectively and efficiently played his/her roles. This study covered all the 14 schools that are presently receiving capacity building support from SNV in the Education sector.

Focus of the intervention and strategy:

The activity focused on identification of systemic constraints that prevented the district, the schools and the communities from addressing the WASH issues as part of their responsibilities. Each school was handled separately since it was quite cumbersome to bring all the schools together. It was also noted that different school had different peculiar challenges and this approach provided more quality contact between the Local capacity builder (LCB) and the target stakeholders. The overall strategy was to connect the capacities of the different stakeholders who play a role in school WASH at the District, schools and communities. This involved multi-stakeholder processes (MSPs)⁵--



A poorly maintained borehole at Ngenge primary school

¹ WASH stands for Water Sanitation and Hygiene

² Water and Environment Sector Performance Report 2009

³ SNV North East Portfolio Report of the School level baseline survey May 2009

⁴ Annual Health Sector Performance Report 2007/2008

⁵ Multi-Stakeholder Processes (MSPs) are processes that aim to involve stakeholders in improving situations that affect them

bringing actors together and carefully guiding them in establishing existing gaps that needed redress. Capacity building support was then given to address these gaps

Kapchorwa District:

With a total land area of 1738km² (3.8% of the total land area of Uganda) where 638km² is covered by the Mt. Elgon national park, Kapchorwa District is located in Eastern Uganda and borders the District of Sironko in the south-west, Nakapiripit and Moroto in the north and Bukwo and the Republic of Kenya in the east. Administratively the District is divided into 2 counties, Tingey and Kween with 12 subcounties including Kapchorwa Town Council.

The district has a total of 111 primary schools with 83 government supported, 19 private and 9 community schools. For secondary schools, the district has over 22 schools, 8 are government, 2 private and 12 community. There is 1 Technical institution, 1 Teacher Training College.

This WASH in schools capacity support focused on 14 SNV supported schools with a total pupil population of 9,407; with 4, 623 boys and 4,784 girls as shown in the table 1 below.

Table 1: The 14 schools, their enrollment and attendance

Name of school	Boys	Girls	Total enrolment	No of classrooms	Average attendance			% daily attendance
					B	G	T	
Chepsikunya	196	175	371	7	140	120	260	70
Ngenge	270	230	500	7	230	170	400	80
Kapteret	431	480	911	10	420	430	870	95
Tegeres	373	423	796	8	300	350	650	82
Kapsirikwo	432	469	901	9	380	420	800	89
Amukol	264	240	504	13	203	186	389	77
Kaproron	365	342	707	10	340	260	600	85
Chemwania	423	458	881	14	300	400	700	80
Tumboboi	187	202	389	7	176	191	367	94
Benet	458	487	945	12	418	403	820	87
Tukumo	164	157	321	7	120	140	260	81
Sumaton	318	383	701	7	290	310	600	86
Kapchesombe	352	313	665	9	280	220	500	75
Kaplelko	390	425	815	12	345	372	717	88

Sebei Diocese Community Development and Empowerment (SD-CODE) was identified and engaged as a Local Capacity builder (LCB) to support SNV advisory staff in implementing this schools WASH capacity development service. During the entire process of implementation, the LCB and the SNV advisory team closely interacted with the District team, the school teams and key community level stakeholders.

A capacity needs assessment exercise was carried out and a capacity development plan for each of the 14 schools was drawn. The target group included the District Education office, the school management committee members, head teachers, senior women/men teachers, PTA members, compound teachers, health teachers, pupil leadership and the community leadership. The team also worked with a select number of community members around the schools.

The capacity development plan was then implemented resulting in the development of a school WASH improvement plan.

THE IDENTIFIED CAPACITY GAPS

Through MSPs at both the district and schools, the LCB initially set out to identify the capacity needs that existed among all the WASH in school stakeholders. It was found that while there was varying differences in the gaps per school, there were also many areas where the gaps cut across most of the schools. Listed below are some of the issues that cut across the schools

All schools generally lacked sufficient resources to increase and maintain an adequate level of WASH facilities to meet the increasing enrolment of pupils in the schools. In most situations the WASH technologies did not adequately meet the existing conditions and there were also equity issues in sharing of facilities between boys and girls. It was also found that generally knowledge across stakeholders was quite low and only a few stakeholders were involved in both decision making and

the day to day WASH activities. Poor attitudes towards operation and maintenance led to low prioritization of this important activity and general lack of WASH plans.

It was found that a number of schools had no safe water supply facilities in or near the schools, while operation and maintenance for those who had was very poor with several broken and never repaired. The water chain was also poor with little importance given to boiling water.

The sanitation situation also had its own specific problems with some schools having permanent latrines that were full but could not be emptied for re-use and most facilities had been constructed with very little (if any) involvement of the schools management organs.

Hand washing was a long forgotten practice revealing poor attitudes from management, teachers, and the pupils including the surrounding community. There was also a general absence of toileteries and latrine cleaning materials with no priority given to providing sanitary materials and changing rooms for girl child. On top of this, few avenues for WASH promotion from child to child existed as there were no health promotion clubs in the schools and little or no WASH messages existed around the school compounds to continue reminding the pupils of the key WASH practices. It was further observed that a big gap existed between knowledge and practice on WASH since this is taught and examined in all classes but this never translated in good WASH practices.

Supervision support from the District Education Office was also weak and this gave the school leadership grounds to ignore putting in place good WASH practices.

These gaps formed the basis for the capacity development plan that was designed and implemented in order to improve this situation

CAPACITY BUILDING

After the assessment process revealing very many underlying issues in the WASH practices which needed to be addressed, the team developed a capacity support programme. Capacity building of the different actors both at the district and schools was done in accordance with identified needs at the different levels.

Participatory WASH promotion approaches such as the faecal-oral route, the sanitation ladder, the three pile sort and the safe water chain were used. These approaches were vital in helping the school stakeholders to:

- Trace the faecal-oral transmission routes in the school and surrounding community
- Recognize the level of the school and surrounding community in the sanitation ladder i.e from open defecation to a well constructed latrine shelter.
- Identify issues of poor hygiene like poor handwashing practices, unwashed fruits being sold in the school compound, sharing water sources with animals, poor storage of food and water at home and even at school that allow contamination
- Realize poor water handling practices that lead to contamination like dirty containers, poor storage and use
- Identify other bad practices done in the water sources such as bathing and washing clothes, defecating/urinating, swimming etc

The school management organs were also trained in resource mobilization for WASH and Participatory WASH promotion approaches which ended in the development of a School WASH improvement plan

During the resource mobilization training for the school management committees, guidance was given on how to ably and clearly state the problem, reveal desired situation, identify possible sources of funds, approach potential partners with written document and follow up. Emphasis was also given on prioritising water sanitation and hygiene in school budgets

Through the MSPs that brought together all the school stakeholders an agreed plan on how to address these issues in light of the knowledge provided was developed. This plan focused on mostly issues that the schools and communities are able to address with limited external help. Other identified issues that were beyond the schools ability to address were also highlighted for future follow up. The plans varied per school in accordance with school specific issues but there were many cross cutting issues. Beginning July 2009, the schools agreed on activities which included the following.

OUTCOMES

- Launch WASH campaign in the selected schools and the surrounding community
- Community sensitization on WASH
- Strengthening general cleanliness of the latrines, classrooms and school compound
- Providing water for hand washing in the school
- Guidance, support and counseling to the girl child on menstrual hygiene
- Form WASH clubs in schools to promote child-to-child passing of messages and WASH committees within the nearby community
- Boil or treat drinking water for pupils and teachers
- Promote WASH by having a talking school compound
- Strengthening health parades and promoting good health practices.
- Prioritize operation and maintenance of WASH facilities in school budgets
- Provide sanitary facilities for the girl child
- Advocate to the parents to provide toilet paper
- Committing the LCs to formulate bye-laws

The activity ended with a feedback meeting held at the district. This meeting was meant to share and discuss the findings and bring on board all the stakeholders at the district and further strengthen monitoring at this level.

OUTREACH

The capacity of the supervisory staff for district education office, the schools management organs (SMCs, PTAs, senior woman/man teachers) for 14 schools, community leadership around the schools and a total of 802 pupils was strengthened to address WASH issues. More people in the surrounding communities were reached indirectly

Followup monitoring visits to these schools have revealed remarkable changes after quite a short time. The following are some of the encouraging changes that have occurred in such a short time.

Increased attendance of pupils in most of the schools has been observed and in the two schools of Kaproron and Tegeres increase in the attendance of the girl child has greatly increased. Statistics from Tegeres enrolment reveal an increase from 796 to 835 pupils.

Responsive to provision of equipment and infrastructures in schools has improved. An example is Kaproron P.S which embarked on a resource mobilisation drive after the activity. As a result a four stance latrine has been added in Paproron P.S. and is in use and hand washing facilities are in place and functional.

Promotion of good hygiene and sanitation practices has also greatly improved in the schools supported. The school administration have now put in place school cleaning rosters, strengthened health parades and increased menstrual support to the girl child. Now pupils know how to use hand washing facilities, are active in cleaning classes, compound and water sources on regular basis. Some schools have reported putting boiled water in jerricans with in classes for use.

Supervision and maintenance of water and sanitation facilities has also improved with teachers on duty in most making sure



Talking compound with new messages at Kaproron PS



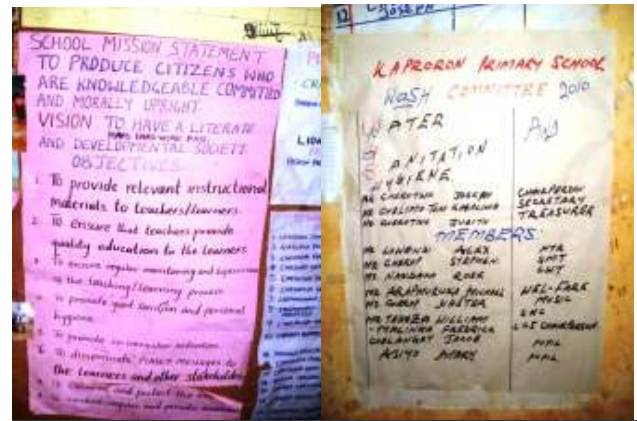
New latrine and handwashing facilities at Kaproron PS and new tap at Tegeres PS

there is water at all times and pupils reporting dysfunction of facilities. SMCs and communities now more involved in addressing school WASH issues

The District education office school supervisory staff has a also improved focus on the WASH issues during their routine monitoring visits to schools. This has strengthened the sustainability the changes brought about by this support.

Some members of the communities surrounding the schools have also reported changes of practice in their homes. One lady reported that she now regularly boils water and that she presently can recognise boiled and unboiled water by the way it tastes.

Improved collaboration between SD-CODE the LCB and the District Education and Water Offices has also been reported. The District appreciated SD-CODE as a capacity builder and has since continued to involve them in regular District WASH issues.



School planning now including WaSH activities as seen here from Kaproron and Tegeres Primary

IMPACT

The following impacts have been registered so far.

- Over 70% increase in the number of pupils who attend school daily
- Attendance of the girl child has improved as testified by the senior woman teachers from Kaproron and Tegeres Primary schools
- Reduction in WASH related illness like diarrhoea, typhoid as reported by the Headmasters from Kaproron and Tegeres P.S.

LESSONS LEARNED

Multi stakeholder processes once well applied to address WASH issues in schools have the potential to produce great improvements in the WASH practices in schools as seen from results from Kaproron.

Without direct provision of funds or physical facilities it is still possible to make great improvement in the WASH practices in schools through building capacity of the schools management and involvement of all relevant actors. The people also appreciated the fact that with little external help they are able to rise up and make big changes to the quality of their lives.

Children in schools can be used as change agents to improve WASH practices in their home making schools entry points as shown by results in Tegeres PS

It's possible to create harmony between the communities and schools through coordination meetings as seen from effort to promote household sanitation through pupils in Tegeres P.S

The District Education Office recognized that involvement of all stakeholders at the school level is needed to improve WASH in schools.

STANDARD DATA

- Composition of team: Turimaso Wilbrord, Chemisito Satya Ali, Joseph Semujju, Eyadu Bernard
- LCB: SD-CODE
- LCD PPDs: 46
- SNV Staff PPDs: 15