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TRANSFORMATION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE
AND RESILIENT WASH SERVICES

From awareness raising to sustainable behaviour change in school: the WASH in school road map

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Development organisations working in the WASH sector tend to focus on their preferred methodologies for Hygiene and Sanitation (H&S) promotion, while the sustainability of an intervention depends much more on how the methodology is implemented and whether an enabling environment is in place. In 2014, Caritas Switzerland in Kenya started a learning and critical review process on how to improve its WASH in school interventions to finally make the step from raising students' awareness on good H&S practices to sustainable behaviour change. As a result of this process, a number of lessons on how to foster the enabling environment were learned, based on which the WASH in school road map was developed. This article presents, for each phase of the WASH in school road map, the main lessons learned and how they have been implemented in Kenya.

Introduction

Why focusing on children?

In many Water, Hygiene and Sanitation (WASH) projects, achieving behaviour change in the field of Hygiene and Sanitation (H&S) has been a real challenge. Despite new research on behaviour change, it is a fact that changing behaviours of adults is a complex process that requires a lot of time and efforts.

Children, on the other hand, are easier targets. They have less knowledge and experience, fewer responsibilities and a different conception of time and the future, and are also naturally more inquisitive and eager to learn than adults. Working in schools and changing children's behaviours first is considered a promising entry point to improving H&S behaviours and conditions in communities. Children can replicate good hygiene practices at home and become change agents in their community.

Caritas Switzerland's experience in WASH in school

WASH is a key field of activity of Caritas Switzerland in Kenya, Ethiopia and South Sudan, among others. In addition to working with communities, many projects have focused on schools with the aim to ensure access to WASH facilities for students and to improve H&S conditions in schools. Since its development in 2002, Caritas Switzerland has been applying the Children's Hygiene and Sanitation Training (CHAST) methodology. In Kenya only, Caritas Switzerland has worked in more than 80 schools and reached more than 25,000 students using CHAST.

CHAST has been generally well received by project staff, teachers and students. They appreciate the fact that it is a long term, comprehensive and complete methodology, using a variety of tools, including posters, practical hygiene demonstrations, role plays, games and songs to suit different age groups of children.

Rationale: sustainable behaviour change or just awareness raising?

Several recognised methodologies to promote good H&S practices in school exist, such as CHAST, Safe Water School Training Manual (eawag), Fit for School (GIZ), the Three Stars Approach (UNICEF and GIZ) and many more.

Project endline surveys often confirm the effectiveness of these methodologies in raising awareness of children on the links between H&S and health. However, it is often challenging to assess a clear impact in terms of behaviour change. Often, during an endline survey, more students will answer yes at the question 'Do you wash your hands?' compared with the baseline. When they get an external visit, students will also be able to show how well they wash their hands. In many cases, there will be water in the hand washing facility, as head teachers will make sure that it is filled before they receive visitors from the supporting organisation. However, if one goes back to the same school after a couple of years, the provided handwashing facility will probably be either broken or will not have water, and/or the constructed latrines will not be clean. The same applies to children's practices at home: after some years, it is doubtful that many will be washing their hands after using the latrine (if they have one) or before eating.

Most likely, using one methodology or the other would not have made a difference. The success of a WASH in school intervention is not solely determined by the methodology used, as most of these methodologies are well designed and successfully convey H&S messages to student. Rather, what makes the difference and can transform these messages into sustainable behaviour change is how the methodology is being implemented: in which conditions, by whom, when, how often, to whom, etc., and what is being done to ensure that it is sustained – in other words, whether there is an enabling environment in place.

Providing a step by step guidance on how to implement a H&S methodology, in our case CHAST, and thus to foster an enabling environment was the rationale for the development of the WASH in school road map.

Methodology for the development of the WASH in school road map

The WASH in school road map is the result of more than three years of internal critical review and learning. It is based on more than 15 evaluations of projects of which WASH in school and CHAST were major components. The content of the road map was further informed by a research study on how to increase the sustainability of behaviour change in Caritas Switzerland's projects through the creation of an enabling environment and habit formation, carried out in Kenya in 2015 (Affolter, 2015). In addition, numerous workshops were organised in Kenya, South Sudan and Ethiopia to collect feedback and lessons learned from project teams as well as from teachers.

Main lessons learned and results

The WASH in school road map is a manual and supporting documents that provides step by step guidance to project teams towards sustainable implementation of a WASH in school project.

Creating an enabling environment is a long-term process that starts at the design phase of a project and continues throughout project implementation and beyond. The WASH in school road map is thus divided into key implementation phases[1]. For each phase, a chronological sequence of steps is defined, with clear guidelines for project steam on how to realise them. For each step, further guidance is provided in the form of templates such as memorandum of understanding with government institutions or schools, monitoring & evaluation forms, action plans, supervision checklists, meeting guidelines, training materials, etc.

Though designed for the Kenyan context, the WASH in school road map is generic enough to be easily adapted to different countries and contexts. Figure 1 displays the key phases of a WASH in school project.

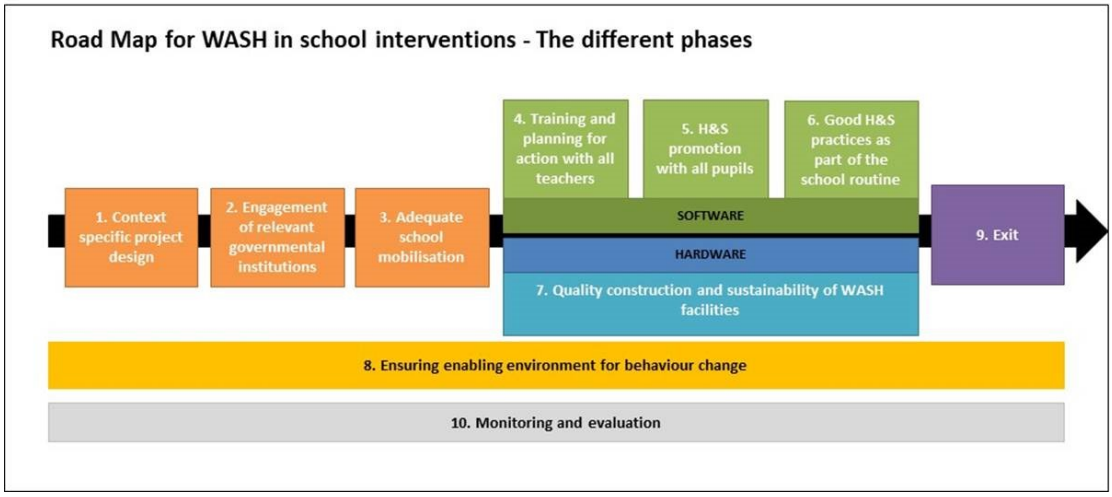

Figure 1. Road map for WASH in school intervention: the different phases

Source: Caritas Switzerland, 2018

So far, the WASH in school road map has been applied in 43 primary schools in Kenya (In Kericho county). For each phase, a selection of the main lessons learned and the most important results is presented below. The results are extracted from a recent final external evaluation carried out in February 2018.

Context specific project design

- **Aligning with the country policies and institutions:** Any project should be designed in line with the country policies and embedded into the country institutional framework. As WASH in school interventions touch on different sectors, it is key to be fully aware of the regulatory and institutional framework of all concerned sectors, including recommended methodologies, national standards or guidelines, and governmental institutions to engage with. Through an in-depth analysis of the regulatory framework around WASH in school, which was part of the preparatory work for the road map, we have built the required expertise to be recognised as a key stakeholder in the WASH in school sector by the Kenyan government. As a result, we now hold the position of co-convener of the Technical Working Group WASH in School, one of seven thematic working groups under the Environmental Sanitation & Hygiene Inter-Agency Co-ordination Committee that operates under the Ministry of Health, since 2015.
- **Complementing the existing school curriculum:** As much as possible, any H&S promotion methodology should fit in or complement the national curriculum. The project team should also ensure that there is no methodology already prescribed in national policy documents before introducing the organisation's prescribed methodology. In the 43 schools in Kenya, CHAST is being thaught either during club hours in the afternoon or complementary to the science lessons in form of practical examples and exercises.

Collaborating with relevant governmental institutions

- **Ensuring ownership of relevant governmental institutions:** As much as possible, the interventions should help the governmental institutions to fulfil their mandate and should be perceived as such. Ideally, the governmental institutions should lead the process (this might depend on the national context) or at least be engaged at all project stages, starting from the design of the project to the selection of school, monitoring, and Operation and Maintenance (O&M). To increase ownership, it is key to start engaging with the high level government representatives. For the implementation of our WASH in school projects, we sign a collaboration framework (Memorandum of Understanding) with the county government, which includes clear rules of engagement from all parties as well as a clear exit strategy. From there, government officers are officially commissioned to lead/take part in the project activities.
- **Selection of the schools for the intervention:** Criteria for school selection should be the result of a consultative process with the relevant governmental institutions and be clearly communicated to the

schools. For all our targeted schools, we carry out a joint assessment together with the county ministries of health and education, based on a set of clearly defined criteria. School managements are informed of these criteria and invited to express their interest (or not) in participating in the project, in combination with an offer of what they would contribute to the project. The latter clearly helps enforce motivation of school stakeholders.

Ensuring ownership of all school stakeholders

- **Getting all school stakeholders on board:** All school stakeholders, from the head teacher to the teachers, the board of management, and the parents should be willing (and understand the need) to take actions to improve H&S conditions in their school. As with governmental institutions, we thus first clarify the collaboration framework with each school, including the rules of engagement, expected contributions from all parties, and the exit strategy. This framework is concretised in a joint Memorandum of Understanding, including a workplan for hardware detailing the kind of expected contributions – usually in form of unskilled labour and local materials – as well as a timeframe for each action.
- **Head teachers can determine the success of the intervention:** The motivation of the head teacher should be a essential criterion for the selection of a school. She/he holds a central position within the school for communication with the board of management, other teachers and parents. Her/his understanding of the need for improvement of H&S conditions at the school is therefore essential to the success of any WASH intervention. We thus consider the motivation of the head teacher in any selection process and once the school is selected, we immediately sensitize her/him on the need for H&S improvements. At the heart of this activity is the development of a H&S action plan that the school implements with the support of the project.
- **Building capacity of the board of management:** Strong leadership and good management skills are essential to support H&S interventions. Therefore, we organise trainings for boards of management on these topics to build their capacities and help anchor good H&S practices in the management systems of the school. Depending on available capacities, the trainings are facilitated by the relevant government institutions or our staff.
- **Parents play a crucial role:** It is important to encourage the boards of management to organise regular meetings with parents to update them on the progress and challenges faced by the school with regard to the project but also in general. Due to the training in management and leadership provided by the project, the boards of management increasingly communicate on organisational and financial matters of the school, strengthening accountability towards parents and the community in general. The meetings are also used to sensitize parents on children's needs in terms of H&S and convey good H&S practices to be supported at home.

Engaging students as change agents

- **Combining school and community interventions:** For more effectiveness, our WASH in school interventions are combined with H&S promotion in surrounding villages.
- **Clear roll out strategy for H&S promotion to students:** Regardless of the H&S promotion methodology used, the school stakeholders should clearly define by whom, to whom, when and how it will be rolled out. In order to reach all students, we first train trainers of teachers from the targeted schools, which afterwards train and supervise their teacher colleagues during the roll out of CHAST. This enables us to reach all students of a school. Each school defines at the begining, its own detailed roll out strategy, defining the times and regularity of CHAST sessions for all students.
- **Clarifying the role of School Health Club (SHC):** A SHC is a common structure at schools in different countries. While its members should be hygiene champions, it is often reduced to being responsible for cleaning the latrines, which is not rewarding task. Therefore, a SHC often exists in theory but its members get quickly demotivated. School stakeholders should rather get inspired on what fun activities the SHC can carry out. For this, we have developed a poster with examples and guidelines for fun activities. This includes drawing competition, organising key event, drama play, etc. This poster is handed over to head teachers in school with whom we work.
- **Additional activities for students to put the learnings into practice:** To move from raised awareness to forming habits, good H&S practices should be integrated into the school routine. For this, we work with the schools so that they organise weekly monitoring of the WASH facilities by the students, routinize group hand washing at fixed times during the day such as before lunch time, have a teacher on

duty who reminds the students to wash their hands after using the toilets, organise H&S related activities during special events such as the world hand washing day, and organise exchange visits with other schools. Head teachers from target school have reported that even schools that are not part of the project come to their schools to learn from them.

Choosing locally appropriate technological solutions

- **Ensuring that the hardware technology responds to the needs of the school:** The selection of the WASH infrastructure to be constructed should be based on the school needs and involve the school stakeholders. To determine the most appropriate technology, we consider the following factors:
  - Technical factors, such as availability of materials and spare parts;
  - Climatic and geo-physical conditions (rainfall, soil type, groundwater level, etc.);
  - The capacity of the school stakeholders to carry out O&M and to cover related costs;
  - Locally available options to manage waste products, considering the sanitation system as a whole (Tilley and al, 2014);
  - Social aspects such as children with special needs and nursery school children.
- **Displaying visual cues to trigger good H&S practices:** To attract students to the hand washing facilities and remind them of key H&S messages, WASH facilities provided by us include so-called talking walls. Usually, they are outer walls of sanitation facilities painted by a local artist.
- **Promoting low-cost/locally appropriate solutions:** Instead of expensive WASH facilities or consumables for which spare parts and supply are not always easily available, solutions such as masonry tanks, tippy-taps using local materials, self-fabricated soap or ash, can be promoted. In order to ensure O&M and repair of provided WASH facilities, we hire train local artisans and provide them with hands-on training before the construction work.
- **Working with (local) artisans instead of contractors:** We procure materials ourselves and hire (local) artisans for the construction work. Together with constant site supervision and technical monitoring, we achieve higher quality of construction work with reduced costs and improve adherence to set dates.
- **Closely supervising construction work:** Involving the school stakeholders, including parents, in the construction supervision can help build the sense of ownership of the infrastructure constructed. In our projects, the head teachers together with the boards of management coordinate the construction work and supervise working mode of local artisans.
- **Training on O&M:** Even if hardware technology constructed is simple to operate, it is important to organise a O&M training with the relevant school stakeholders. We have developed an O&M manual specifically for schools, which guides the trainings and is handed over to each school. During the training, in addition to learning how to operate and maintain the infrastructure practically, we train boards of management in budgeting and planning for O&M costs and required consumables such as soap, detergents and toilet paper, assigning clear responsibilities for each task to its members. This follows the principles of the life-cycle costs approach (Fonseca et al, 2011). As part of the training, the boards of management also identify funding strategies, mainly through income-generating activities. Moreover, waste management, especially linked to menstrual hygiene management, is discussed during the training. The manual can be adapted to different project locations and includes a list of local suppliers for needed spare parts, consumables and desludging services.

Conclusion and way forwards

- The road map has been endorsed widely by Caritas Switzerland's field staff and is being implemented in East Africa to complement the well-known CHAST methodology.

Before embarking in a WASH in school project, Caritas Switzerland now trains its staff on this WASH in school road map. All project staff should realise that engaging in H&S promotion activities in a school is much more than just rolling out CHAST, or any other H&S methodology. During the training, project teams adapt the sequence of steps and recommendations to the specific context of their project. They discuss how best to ensure buy-in of governmental institutions and ownership of all school stakeholders. They also agree on the most appropriate way to ensure that the school has the capacities required to put in place the right mechanisms to sustain the WASH infrastructures and continue the H&S activities in their school beyond the project duration.

This WASH in school road map is being implemented in Ethiopia as part of a broader WASH in school project financed by the Fred Hollow foundation, targeting more than 120 primary schools.

A road map should be a living document: Lessons learned from the project implementations in Kenya, Ethiopia and eventually beyond will be used to continuously improve the road map.

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Note

1. This was partly inspired from the enabling environment domains in school as established by Saboori et al. (2011) that shows that schools in which WASH interventions are most sustainable have found solutions in the following enabling environment domains: financial capacity; accountability; technical feasibility and availability; community support; school leadership and management; and student engagement.

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