

Research Findings

SWASH+ has conducted a series of rigorous quantitative studies in all 185 schools as well as qualitative studies on a number of topics. Reports and summaries of the research findings can be found online at www.swashplus.org.

Research topics include:

- Anal Cleansing
- Diffusion (message transfer to homes)
- Facilities
- Impact
- Innovations (Soapy Water, Girls' Urinals, Washrooms)
- KESSP Direct Funding Model
- Menstrual Management
- Psychosocial Stress
- Rainwater Harvesting
- School WASH Baseline Data for Suba, Nyando, Kisumu, and Rachounyo districts
- Sustainability
- WASH knowledge, attitudes and practices in schools
- WASH knowledge, attitudes and practices in communities



Photo: Matthew Freeman

What will it take?

There are many factors needed to bring school WASH improvements to all schools in Kenya in a sustainable manner. In addition to the commitment of head teachers, teachers, parents, community leaders, students, and non-governmental actors, SWASH+ believes these three factors are critical:

- An adequate budget for WASH at the school level;
- A viable government-led integrated monitoring system for school WASH; and
- Knowledge promotion and behavior change through targeting school head teachers and school management committees as primary agents of change in Kenyan primary schools.

Achieving success in school WASH is a challenge that calls for collective effort to help ensure that school is a rewarding experience for Kenya's children.

Contact

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Partners



What is SWASH+?

SWASH+ is a five-year applied research project to identify, develop and test innovative approaches to school-based water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in Nyanza Province, Kenya. It was founded in 2006 based on the experience of a safe water systems school project in Western Kenya. It is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Global Water Challenge.

The partners that form the SWASH+ consortium are CARE, Emory University, the Great Lakes University of Kisumu, the Government of Kenya, the Kenya Water for Health Organisation (KWAHO), and Water.org (formerly Water Partners).

School WASH in Kenya

In Kenya, the introduction of free primary education in 2003 led to an influx of over 1.3 million students. A 2005 school WASH assessment led by the International Water and Sanitation Centre revealed that schools in Kenya averaged 64 students per latrine, more than twice the government-mandated ratio, and that over 90% of schools lacked a safe water source and even basic handwashing facilities.

The Government of Kenya and other actors are addressing this situation. Of note, in September 2009, SWASH+ and the Ministry of Education signed a memorandum of understanding to pilot a set of enhancements to the Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP), which involves direct disbursement of funds to assist Kenya's poorest primary schools in improving their basic school infrastructure. During the pilot phase, the SWASH+ partners will provide technical support and oversight on the implementation of the enhanced direct funding model in 18 pilot schools.



Photo: Global Water Challenge

"I am participating in this program because my family will benefit when the latrines are constructed. My children attend the same school and will be using the facilities when completed. I also want to get knowledge on how to construct latrines."

- Ruth Adhiambo, 35-year-old farmer, married with four children, Mikiria Primary School

Communities

The '+' in SWASH+ stands for "plus community impact" and represents the intent to benefit not only schools but the communities of which they are a part.

A significant area of research for the project has been whether children take home hygiene messages and behaviors adopted in school, as this would significantly increase impact.

SWASH+ research findings to date show modest transfers of messages from children to parents, suggesting that school and community interventions should be combined for maximum impact.

Our Work in Schools

SWASH+ implementation activities have made a difference for pupils and teachers in 185 schools in Nyanza province and provided subject material for research efforts. Implementation activities from 2006-2009 have mainly been in the following areas:

Water: In selected schools without water, SWASH+ installs or improves boreholes or rainwater harvesting systems. The schools are then provided special containers for making available hand-washing water and drinking water treated with WaterGuard, a sodium hypochlorite solution.



Photo: CARE

Latrines: The number of latrines in most schools is often well below the government-mandated ratio of latrines-per-pupil. The latrines that do exist are typically sub-standard. SWASH+ focuses on improved latrine construction for durability, appearance, and to control smell, and has also constructed and researched girls' urinals and washrooms.

Behaviors: Incorporating school WASH into the life of the school is as important as building latrines. SWASH+ trains teachers (patrons) and forms health clubs so that students can spread the word to their peers about the importance of handwashing and treating drinking water, and perform some WASH duties.