

MAXIMIZING THE BENEFITS FROM WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION

**Water and Sanitation for all:
practical ways to improve accessibility for disabled people**

2. Inclusive Educational Facilities Benefit All

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Introduction

IN developing countries, many children with disabilities have no access to basic education. Negative attitudes, lack of teacher skills and inaccessible school environment among others are contributing factors. The inability to use basic facilities such as the latrines owing to its inaccessible state, can keep a child with disability out of school.

Leonard Cheshire International is implementing a pilot project on Inclusive Education in five schools in Western Kenya. A key component of this project is environmental adaptation.

Problem

Before implementation of this project, accessibility all five schools was difficult for children with certain disabilities. The roads were rough with heavy soil erosion washing away the road surfaces. Some paths lead to streams without proper bridges so pupils crossed on dangerous manmade logs (Figure 1). Pathways around the school and school playgrounds were full gullies and trenches. During games, the few who were in schools either went home early to avoid games, or watched others playing from the side, which simply reinforced their isolation.

The entrance to many of the classrooms were narrow with heaps of soil in the form of stairs, while water and sanitation

facilities were old and poorly maintained (Figures 2 and 3), and the floors of latrines were caving in, posing great risks to all children, while those with disabilities were totally unable to use them.



Figure 1. Child being carried across a poorly constructed bridge



Figure 2. School water supply (before)



Figure 3. School latrines (before)



Figure 4. School water supply (after)

Implementation

Through community participation, adaptations were made by pupils, teachers and community to:

- Roads and pathways entering the school compound,
- School compound and playgrounds levelled and marked appropriately. Trees planted to reduce soil erosion in future,
- Classrooms: concrete ramps, wider doorways, larger windows providing enough light for pupils to see properly,
- Water - parents and the government have provided funds to sink wells (Figure 4). Today, all schools within the pilot project have access to clean water. This has improved the hygienic conditions of the pupils.
- School latrines rebuilt and made accessible (Figure 5 and Figure 6).
- Issues of attitudes, teacher skills, and teaching methodologies were addressed.



Figure 5. School latrine (after), showing concrete ramp, wide entrance and pedestal toilet



Figure 6. Interior of toilet showing handrails and chain from ceiling for support*

* If badly positioned, a chain could swing and hurt a user. A safer and cheaper alternative could be a rope or rubber strap.

Benefits

These changes have improved education for all children and in particular increased the enrolment of children with disabilities in schools by 113% in three years. Improvement and adaptation of the school environment, including sanitation facilities, is an important factor in improving education for all children, and increasing enrolment of disabled children in school.

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