

**33rd WEDC International Conference, Accra, Ghana, 2008**

**ACCESS TO SANITATION AND SAFE WATER:  
GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS AND LOCAL ACTIONS**

**Addressing the water and sanitation needs  
of primary schools: Experiences from East Africa**

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*In East Africa, many national governments have adopted a policy of free universal primary education in recognition of the importance of an educated population to support local poverty reduction efforts. Unfortunately, not enough consideration has been paid to the important contribution of clean and healthy school conditions towards better educational achievements. Water and sanitation in schools also have important gender aspects; the absence or inadequacy of these basic services is a major disincentive for many girls to attend school. WaterCan's Clean Water for Schools Program, launched in 2005, has to date assisted more than 10,000 students and teachers at primary schools in East Africa. Using a combination of posters and PowerPoint presentations, WaterCan's Program Director and representatives from local partner organizations working in East Africa, will share their practical experience gained from programming in over 25 primary schools located in various rural and urban contexts in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda.*

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**Areas to be covered in the presentation session**

- Advice on best practices for mobilizing and engaging students, teachers, parents and local authorities
- Developing child-friendly and gender-sensitive water supply and sanitation facilities
- Design and implementation considerations for effective school-based sanitation and hygiene education activities
- Sharing of key challenges, lessons learned, and recommendations

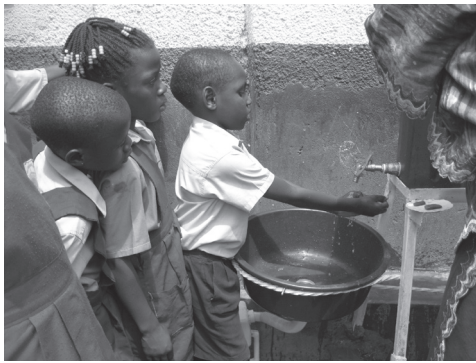
**Key findings to date**

- Early and sustained engagement of school administrators, parent-teacher associations, and local authorities is critical for ensuring "buy-in" by key project stakeholders. This will help to increase the likelihood that developed water and sanitation facilities will be properly operated and maintained. Activities such as organizing a high-profile launch event, development of an official Memorandum of Understanding signed by key stakeholders, formation of a school-based water and sanitation management committee, and concluding with an official hand-over ceremony, all help contribute toward this goal.
- Child-friendly facility designs need to keep in mind the developmental differences, both physically and mentally, of students of different ages attending the same school (e.g. heights of hand-washing taps, availability of good lighting in stalls, size of pit latrine holes).
- The child-to-child educational methodologies promoted in School Health Clubs are effective for teaching and promoting good hygiene and sanitation practices among students. The use of skits, songs, artwork, and "talking-walls" is popular among students.
- There is evidence that some students are taking their increased hygiene and sanitation knowledge home, and attempting to influence the behavior of their parents, siblings, and other family members. The lack of water supply in many students' homes, however, has been a major impediment for supporting such efforts. Ideally, school-based water, sanitation, and hygiene education activities should be complemented by similar interventions in the broader community.
- A clean and hygienic school environment goes a long way to help create a more conducive learning environment for students, especially girls, and a more enjoyable work environment for their teachers.



**Photograph 1: Example of a hygiene promotion “talking wall” at one of the assisted primary schools, Wakiso District, Uganda**

Source: WaterCan/VAD



**Photograph 2: Handwashing - a critical component of any school-based hygiene promotion effort, Kampala, Uganda**

Source: WaterCan/CIDI



**Photograph 3. Separate toilet facilities for boys and girls help to address important gender issues relating to privacy and safety, Siaya District, Western Kenya**

Source: WaterCan/KWAHO

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