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TRANSFORMATION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE  
AND RESILIENT WASH SERVICES

## **Football as a catalyst for improving WASH services in schools in Kenya**

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*Sport can be an effective platform for engaging communities in developmental issues. This paper presents findings from an innovative public-private partnership program, Football for WASH (F4WASH), initiated by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kenya in 2012, aimed at improving WASH services in schools. During the first phase (2012-2016), a WASH services have been improved in 170 public primary schools in seven counties, benefiting 119, 420 school children. A qualitative evaluation conducted shows other than increasing the number and maintenance of WASH facilities in schools leading to improved learning outcomes, sports for WASH is an effective catalyst for changing hygiene behaviours not only in schools but also in communities. The success of this program led to an extension to the next phase and attracted commitments of substantial resources for WASH in Schools from three county governments, with a specific requirement for bidders to demonstrate cost-recovery and maintenance commitments.*

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### **Introduction**

Improved WASH services in schools are critical for a safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environment. The importance of WASH in Schools (WinS) has been globally recognized by its inclusion in the SDG targets 4.a, 6.1 and 6.2 (WHO-UNICEF, 2017). Estimates show from the Eastern and Southern Africa region shows low coverage of WASH in schools with only just over 50% of schools having adequate water supply and sanitation facilities, and even a lower number (31%) having adequate hygiene facilities (UNICEF, 2012). Other than inadequate numbers, maintenance of these facilities has always been a huge challenge. Innovative approaches are therefore needed to increase the numbers of facilities in schools and to ensure that they are well maintained after commissioning.

One of such innovative approaches is the Football for WASH initiative (F4WASH). This is a public-private partnership program, initiated in 2012 by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kenya, Ghana and Mozambique in partnership with UNICEF, SIMAVI, KNVB and Vitens-Evides. The initiative aimed at using football to increase WASH infrastructure in schools and ensure proper maintenance. The initiative is premised on evidence from the United Nations and other development partners which shows sports to be an effective platform for community engagement in development projects. A specific example is the “*Just Play*” program of UNICEF Pacific, for instance, which is a long-standing collaboration between UNICEF Pacific and the Oceanic Football Confederation and has become an effective vehicle for reaching communities during emergencies (UNICEF Pacific, 2018).

In Kenya, the F4WASH program, launched on World Water Day 2012 with 326million Euros for Kenya, Mozambique and Ghana. It had two overall objectives to:

- improve WASH and football infrastructure in schools while using sports as a platform for promoting good hygiene practices
- institutionalize sustainable mechanisms for meeting maintenance costs of the WASH and football investments through innovative enterprises.

The project also builds capacity of pupils, teachers and parents for sustaining WASH facilities within the schools and the neighbouring communities. It drew in a breadth of civil society and governmental entities in Kenya. These include: UNICEF, Sustainable Aid in Africa (SANA), Kisumu Youth Football Association

(KYFA), Centre for Regeneration and Empowerment of Africa Through Africa (CREATA), Moving the Goalpost (MTG), Transforming Young Stars of Africa (TYSA), Kenya Institute of Soccer Education (KISE), Football Kenya Federation (FKF), the Ministries of Education, Water, Health, and Sports. Gender equity and the inclusion of students with disabilities are fundamental aspects of the F4WASH programme, in line with WASH in schools (WinS) aims of preserving dignity, inclusiveness, academic performance and ability to attend school through menstrual hygiene management (MHM) and accessible facilities (UNICEF, 2015).

### Description of the intervention

Access to safe drinking water in schools in Kenya was about 72.8% as of 2015 (MOE, 2015). For latrines in schools, the national standards are 30 boys for one door and 25 girls for one door. According to the Ministry of Education (MoE), 72% and 74% of schools in Kenya had achieved the national standards for latrines for girls and boys by 2015, with average pupil latrine ratio in public primary schools being 34:1 and 29:1 for boys and girls respectively (MoE, 2015).

F4WASH in Kenya targeted 240 schools in 7 counties. The sanitation intervention was multi-tiered, beginning with construction of gender sensitive and accessible latrines blocks for boys and girls following government of Kenya/UNICEF standards, washrooms for girls, and accessible cubicles for children with disabilities. The sanitation component covered a range of hygiene-related activities including the following: establishing health clubs and capacity building for peer-to-peer hygiene education, promoting hand washing, and MHM. A further component was on safe water source development, ranging from pipeline extensions to shallow wells and boreholes. Another aspect of the programme targeted capacity building of school Boards of Management for sustainable operations and maintenance of the WASH facilities.

In addition, the football infrastructure was improved in the schools. Football sessions were then used as contexts for promoting the hygiene component of the programme. This was done by teachers trained as world coaches with the support of the Football partners who included CREATA, MTG and TYSA. Once engaged and motivated through football matches, pupils were then involved in teaching sessions on WASH.

### Outcomes

The first phase (2012-2016) of Kenya's F4WASH initiative was implemented in 170 public primary schools, reaching 119,420 children in 7 counties. The cost per school was USD 14,000 to provide a full package of access to safe water, improved sanitation facilities, hygiene promotion, capacity building and sustainability. A recent qualitative evaluation of the F4WASH program in Kenya (Coombes et al., 2016) focused on the perceived program outcomes and impacts at the school level focusing primarily on feedback garnered from pupils and teachers, and at the community level as reported by parents, community members, and local county government (Education, Health and Water officers). The evaluation used several qualitative methods: key informant interviews, focus group discussions, observations and checklists, and stakeholder validation exercises. The key findings from this study included.

- **Increased access to WASH services:** The initiative increased access to improved WASH services in schools through installation of new facilities. A total of 170 water, sanitation, handwashing and football facilities have been constructed in the schools. With the facilities and training, school children now practice washing their hands after using the toilet, shower after playing sport, and drink safe water. Teachers observed that increased access to WASH services have lessened water-borne diseases in schools.
- **Improved learning outcomes:** Respondents indicated improved rates of school attendance, retention and performance in both sports and academic work. A positive unintended consequence has been the transfer of students from schools without the intervention, to those with F4WASH programme. Parents said that they value the activities that children do in the after-school clubs (growing vegetables, looking after livestock, soap making) as transferable and life skills, and these are cited as one of the reasons for children to change schools.
- **Improved self-esteem:** Teachers perceive there to be more positive interaction among the pupils, making them more confident and responsible. Respondents observed increased confidence among adolescent girls as they now had better knowledge on menstrual hygiene and access to facilities to manage it. A closer relationship was noted by teachers between boys and girls because of open teaching and conversations on MHM. For instance, there was less teasing of girls by boys during menstruation.

- **Positive impact on the wider community:** Pupils went home to teach their families about the lessons they had learnt at school, including, menstruation, the spread of diseases and the importance of hygienic behaviour. For example, in some instances students created a drying rack at home for crockery to be cleaned and dried properly after use. According to participants in the evaluation process, their parents were amazed to see how much their children were learning; things they had never been taught about themselves. There has certainly been a spill over to communities especially regarding hygiene education and behaviour change. In addition, respondents perceived that pupils were occupied and distracted by the football sessions and were therefore less involved in illicit activities outside school, such as drug abuse.
- **Change in mindsets:** The programme exceeded expectations in terms of behaviour change. While previously children viewed cleaning toilets as a punishment, since the programme they view it as a fundamental aspect of staying healthy. Furthermore, the perception of girls playing football has drastically shifted. While previously it was seen as a cultural taboo for a girl to be running around a football field, it is now largely accepted as the communities have embraced the sport.
- **Opportunities for upscaling:** The success of this model of WASH implementation has given opportunities for upscaling. As of 2017, nearly a dozen Kenyan NGOs had initiated collaborations with government ministries to implement this popular program and an expansion is now on going to cover an additional 90 schools for the year 2017-2018. These additions are occurring in three counties which were part of the first phase: Kisumu, Migori and Trans Nzoia. Through advocacy by UNICEF on the F4WASH package, the 3 county governments have committed to leverage the necessary resources by contributing USD 830,000 for improvements to WASH services in these schools.

### Evidence of success and sustainability

An end of project study done by Timo et al. (2017) conducted in June 2017 provided an analysis of the evidence of the success of the F4WASH programme implemented in Kenya between 2012 and 2016.

- **Sanitation:** The study showed that there have been several significant improvements during and after the F4W programme. There are more sanitary facilities at the schools with open defecation reducing from 79% to 6%. In addition, more schools have installed and executed cleaning schedules and the level of cleanliness has improved from 71% to 83%. There has been increased focus on menstrual hygiene management which has increased from 48% to 90%. Disability has also been mainstreamed in the schools with the schools having toilets for children living with disability increasing from 34% to 93%. On the side of handwashing, impact has been realized with the number of schools with access to soap/ash increasing from 10% to 26%.
- **Drinking water:** The study (Timo 2017) indicated that the conditions for drinking water improved with the average number of pupils per water facility reducing (and thus improved) from 654 to 335 (49%). The quality of water improved significantly from 11% to 91 % at the end line study. Another baseline study (Yolande 2017) indicated high availability (81%) of water in these schools.
- **Community operation and maintenance:** Almost all schools (96%) have trained staff for both WASH and football aspects of operation and maintenance at the end line survey. In terms of gender, 72% of schools have both a female and a male world coach. Over 94% of the schools organized football activities for both boys and girls and 58% reached the communities. This contributed to reduction of vandalism of school sanitation facilities from 42% to 4% and thus enhanced sustainability.
- **Finance/sustainability:** The main focus of the programme was to improve financial sustainability of the interventions. It is encouraging that almost all the schools (100%) signed a memorandum of understanding and set up a financial plan (93%) that covers both operation and maintenance of WASH and football facilities and materials. Almost all of the schools (96%) said that they were able to pay for the replacement of a football. However, the cost recovery of operation and maintenance remains a challenge with most schools (75%) only able to provide 25% of the resources needed. The main source of funding are grants provided by the government.
- **Health impact:** The schools reported almost 50% less diarrhea amongst children under 5 as compared to the control group. For the school going children, less than 12 % experienced diarrhea. This is a positive evidence of success of F4WASH program of reducing incidence of diarrhea by at least 50%.

## Lessons learned

- **Increased emphasis on monitoring, cost-recovery and sustainability:** In particular for UNICEF and implementing partners will need to;
  - Introduce a bidding process for selection of the schools at the beginning of the programme, to ensure there is a willingness on behalf of the schools to have ownership and commitment for sustainability of the programme.
  - clearly define expectations that all actors need to align and commit themselves to the responsibilities they have on maintenance of FWASH system to make it work for all the long term.;
  - provide more ongoing and regular presence, through visits and monitoring,
  - commit funds for an end-of-phase mixed methods evaluation;
  - advocate to the county government to ensure a consistent budget line item for the maintenance of WASH facilities in schools including the provision of sanitary pads for MHM,
  - provide ideas, local support and tools to manage innovations in a way they can be scaled up for funding of maintenance and repair of the WASH facilities.
- **Adequate involvement of all stakeholders:** There is need for an intensive up-front engagement by all local stakeholders to commit and own the project such as cost recovery planning and identification of accountability within the WASH chain of operations. The program will thus do more to support the local actors.
- **Improved knowledge sharing:**
  - The program will seek to include knowledge exchange visits among schools in the program to enhance cross school learning and benchmarking with top performing schools.
  - Hosting tournaments within the community would help spread the values of F4WASH, thus educating the wider community. This will also help involve the community, thus reducing the sentiment of jealousy on the part of neighboring schools. A joint school-community strategy could be developed to help limit the abuse of school services, perhaps co-ordinating more meetings to involve the community holistically. Community coaches should also be included in world coach training to foster this sense of belonging.
- **Certification/rewarding of schools:** UNICEF will work with schools to motivate them through certification for meeting set targets in terms of ensuring functional WASH facilities.
- **Need for control group:** Although a baseline and evaluation was carried out which proved the success of this programme, it was noted that it is necessary in the second phase of the programme to have a control group of schools to identify the merit of F4WASH activities and scale up.

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