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UNICEF – STRATEGY FOR WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

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Abstract

This paper was done to analyze the impact of water treatment, hygiene, and sanitary interventions on better child health outcomes such as practices, knowledge, infections, attitudes, absenteeism and adoption of point-of-use water treatment. Concentrating on the effects of access to, hand washing facilities, safe water, and hygiene education among school-age children. This paper included those that documented the provision of water and sanitation in schools for children below 18 years of age, interventions which evaluate WASH practices. The research is essential to assess the long-term impact of such interventions in various settings. The review concluded that the importance of access to hand washing facilities, safe water, and hygiene education cannot be reinforced in abating water-borne illnesses, school absenteeism, malnutrition, and generally to improve the quality of life and learning performance in children.

Keywords: Health, hygiene, sanitation, water and WASH

INTRODUCTION

Hand hygiene is a critical feature in disease prevention. Yet latest global estimates find that 2.3 billion people lacked soap and water at home, 900 million children lacked soap and water at their school, and 40 % of healthcare facilities were not provided to practice hand hygiene at points of care. Adequate water, sanitation, and hygiene services for schools, households and healthcare facilities are among the most valuable measures to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, including COVID-19. The low levels of coverage of these basic services in many parts of the world return valuable inequalities between and within countries and contribute to the helplessness of these populations to the pandemic.

To provide adequate water, hygiene services, sanitation and make sure that schools give a safe and clean environment. WASH services and related infection prevention and control (IPC) including healthcare waste management and environmental cleaning are essential to prevent infections amongst patients and staff. There was insufficient data to generate global estimates for basic waste management services, and only four countries had sufficient data on basic environmental cleaning services. It provides interventions and expertise aimed at saving lives and reducing illness by improving global access to adequate sanitation, healthy and safe water, and improved hygiene. This program works on long-term prevention and control measures for reducing poverty, improving health and improving socio-economic development as well as acknowledgement of global emergencies and explosion of life-threatening illnesses.

Objectives:

The WASH Strategy's objectives are:

1. To achieve equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all by 2030.
2. To achieve access to adequate and equitable hygiene and sanitation for all and paying special attention to the essential needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations by 2030.

II. PROGRAMMING PRINCIPLES:

1. Reduce inequality:

UNICEF will strive to reduce inequalities for children through robust WASH programming, encouraging government duty-bearers and other stakeholders to priorities support for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children, such as those with disabilities, wherever they are. It will support efforts to strengthen monitoring systems to better identify the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Special attention will be paid to those experiencing multiple disadvantages such as girls in poor households, or children with disabilities living in isolated communities.

2. Encourage the quality services at scale:

UNICEF will use its sector leadership, its in-country presence and its strong relationships with government and other partners including within the UN family to support for strengthening national capacity for long term to provide quality and sustainable services at scale. It will promote and support this multi-faceted sustainability agenda by promoting innovative approaches and building new partnership frameworks and it will also encourage a greater role for the private sector in attain sustainable and quality services at scale, ranging from community entrepreneurs and other local private sector actors to international and national financial institutions working with new sector financing models.

3. Promote resilient development

UNICEF will use its multi-level presence and hold power to help communities build strength to shocks, particularly from the impacts of climate change and emergencies. It will help communities build local capacity for resilience planning and systems management, while ensuring that community needs and priorities are reflected in national policy.

4. Integrate humanitarian and development programming

UNICEF will promote strengthened and more holistic sector coordination mechanisms, including the transition from the cluster approach to national coordination mechanisms and ensure that emergency preparedness and prevention are standard components within national sector planning instruments.

5. Strengthen national systems

UNICEF will invest in systems-building and the development of national capacity on a priority basis to help all stakeholders contribute effectively towards the goal of sustainable WASH services at scale. To help strengthen government regulatory, planning, monitoring and procurement systems, it will use the existing systems, while providing support for improving them, including through efforts to strengthen national enabling environments.

III. PROGRAMMING APPROACHES:

UNICEF will utilize six programming approaches to deliver lasting results for children.

1. Strengthen enabling environments:

UNICEF will use and further establish analytical tools, such as its WASH bottleneck analysis tool (WASH BAT), to analyse control within each permit environment building block, identify solutions and develop cost action plans to address bottlenecks. These processes will be conducted jointly with government and other partners using existing collaboration and coordination mechanisms such as joint sector reviews, with an emphasis on sub-national capacity building in support of national decentralization efforts.

2. Utilize evidence to promote child rights:

UNICEF will act as a key advocate for children within the WASH sector, encouraging government duty-bearers to fulfil – and others to respect and promote – the rights to water and sanitation for all. UNICEF will accelerate efforts to generate evidence on children and WASH, and use its influence and convening power to ensure that this evidence is used to set priorities within the WASH sector and other sectors such as education, health and nutrition.

3. Leverage sustainable financial resources:

Tens of billions of dollars will be required annually to meet the SDG targets for basic water, sanitation and hygiene. UNICEF and other sector actors recognize that overseas development assistance (ODA) and other traditional sources of funding will not be sufficient to meet the targets. New funding sources and new financing mechanisms are required. Working with the World Bank and other International Financial Institutions (IFIs), the private sector and other partners, UNICEF will help mobilize new funding sources to deliver results for children at scale.

4. Build sustainable markets

UNICEF will emphasize support for sustainable markets for water, sanitation and hygiene goods and services that balance demand and supply. Supply-side efforts will focus on strengthening markets so that goods and services are delivered to communities reliably and affordably, including in isolated rural areas that are currently underserved in many countries.

IV. THE UNICEF STRENGTHS IN WASH

1. A valued government partner:

In many countries, UNICEF has engaged with governments on a comprehensive scale for over forty years, providing continuous support through times of stability and crisis. This intensive engagement gives UNICEF a unique role in the sector to support the government, advocate for reform and lead coordination to scale up sector results.

2. Encouraging innovation:

UNICEF has a long history of pioneering innovation in the sector and using its capacity, field presence and global reach to encourage deployment at scale. Recent examples of innovation include mobile to web citizen monitoring tools; tools to audit sustainability; emergency supply kits that allow women and girls to maintain menstrual hygiene; dignity and personal safety; and the Community Approaches to Total Sanitation (CATS) model; for which UNICEF has played a significant role in scaling up.

3. Humanitarian leader:

The scale of the UNICEF WASH generous work has grown in response to enlarge needs, benefitting an annual average of 17 million people in over 70 countries during the previous Strategy period. UNICEF is also the lead agency for coordination under the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) system both globally and, in most cases, at the country level.

4. Working for children across sectors:

With its multi-sectoral teams of in-country professionals, UNICEF has expertise in education, health, nutrition, social policy and other sectors, and access to key partner networks in these areas. This access facilitates cross-sectoral programming including WASH in schools and HCFs, and WASH in support of nutrition programmes.

5. Convening and working at all levels:

UNICEF has a strong presence at the global, regional and country levels, allowing it to convene key sectoral forums and coordination mechanisms, notably hosting the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) Secretariat and convening regular high-level meetings.

V. RESULTS AREAS

1. Water

The aim is to capture continuous improvements from no service at all through to safely managed drinking water. The SDG global indicator “percentage of the population using a safely managed drinking water source” captures the main elements of the agreed target and is defined as:

- an improved drinking water source;
- which is located on premises;
- available when needed;

2. Sanitation:

The ladder aims to capture progressive improvements from no service at all (open defecation) through to safely managed sanitation – which reflects consensus that management of faecal waste along the entire sanitation chain needs to be addressed. The efforts to eliminate open defecation while also working with partners and government to achieve a basic level of access to sanitation for all, and move towards progressively reach safely managed sanitation, which is defined as:

- an improved sanitation facility;
- not shared with other households, and
- safely disposed of in situ, or transported and treated off-site.

3. Hygiene:

UNICEF will focus on influencing the change in hygiene behaviour in the four key areas of hand washing, safe water handling, menstrual hygiene management (MHM) and the safe disposal of excreta. These areas will be emphasized in programme design based on evidence of their importance to the health and well-being of children, women and communities and on the fact that they are still areas of weakness in national WASH programmes in many countries.

4. WASH in institutions

UNICEF will work on improving access to WASH in schools and support of SDG targets relating to education, health and gender equality. This will continue to give special importance WASH in schools while leveraging its experience and leadership in this area into wider support for WASH in other institutions where children are at risk from poor WASH, such as early childhood care facilities.

5. WASH in emergencies

WASH is life-saving in emergencies and the interference or degradation of WASH services during times of crisis affects health, and the safety, nutritional status, and dignity of children and women. Access to WASH is affected in most emergencies, and the delivery of WASH supplies and continuity of WASH services are often the highest priority at the onset of an emergency, and remain important through all stages of a humanitarian crisis.

VI. IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

- make UNICEF programming the benchmark of best practice in supporting governments to deliver results for children – this includes managing our own internal capacity and having the right people in the right places;
- achieve scale and transformational change by putting in place a theory of change for our work on improving enabling environments and monitoring progress against this;
- work across sectors and outcome areas to achieve results for children – using multiple platforms such as health, education and social inclusion systems to both achieve outcomes in WASH and to improving results in other outcome areas;
- The leadership role in coordinating and responding to emergencies;
- manage the evidence, knowledge and experience gained from programming across over 100 countries and make it available to governments and other partners.

VII. CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this publication is to encourage readers to carry out their own examination of water, hygiene and sanitation maps using the approaches and data sources described here. The positive impact of an education element in the process of intervening on the uptake and adherence to hygiene practices should be noted in future research. Knowledge was connected in several studies and uptake of hygiene interventions and practices. There are several independent variables including age of the child, grade level, socioeconomic index, gender, access to hygiene and sanitary facilities use and prior knowledge of hygiene practices which were importantly associated with child health outcomes should be noted and controlled for in future interventions.

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