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# Notes & News

September 2009



Community school in rural Bangladesh (picture: A. Mooijman)

## Note from the editors

Welcome back!

Published since 1995, **Notes & News** is the only international WASH in schools publication which is simultaneously published in English, French and Spanish and which is widely distributed among and read by WASH in schools - partners around the world (older issues of N&N can be downloaded at <http://www.irc.nl/page/463>). With the support of UNICEF New York, we are happily presenting a new edition of Notes & News with interesting articles and news items.

The key focus of this edition of N&N is on the role of creating an enabling environment that makes WASH in schools more effective. We start off with a Call for Action. The first article in N&N focuses on the latest work between IRC and Emory University for Dubai Cares on key aspects of creating a conducive environment in which WASH in schools programmes can thrive in. This is followed by an article on the role of faith in WASH in (faith-based) school programmes. The last and very large article is on school girls and menstruation, often a silent taboo topic but one that is important to bring to the forefront in the WASH in schools debate. Further, there are a number of key news items that may be of interest for you to know. We hope you enjoy this edition of **Notes & News!**

The editors

## CALL for Action on WASH-in-Schools

UNICEF, Water Advocates and Water for People are in the process of collecting success stories and lessons learned from WASH-in-School projects to be used in a *Call for Action WASH-in-Schools publication*. The peer review group for the Call for Action includes IRC, Save the Children, Dubai Cares and others. This publication will be targeted to global policy makers, colleagues in the education and health sector, worldwide press,

corporations and foundations to promote the WASH-in-Schools message to colleagues primarily outside of the water and sanitation field.

Using concrete examples of the work in the sector will make the publication an informative resource as well as a media resource to bring more attention to those schools that lack a WASH program.



The WASH in Schools Notes & News is part of the sanitation & hygiene thematic group and is published twice a year. WASH in Schools Notes & News aims to provide a channel for the dissemination of good practices, current information, knowledge and experiences to all stakeholders that carry out activities in school sanitation and hygiene education.



Stimulus stories, that show data on the school(s) or the beneficiary areas (families, community) and especially data related to 1) reduction of water and sanitation related diseases; 2) improvement in attendance, enrolment and reduction in dropout rates; 3) increase in retention of girl students, 4) impact on families and community, resulting to increase in hand washing practices, reduction in open defecation and construction and use of improved latrines; 5) also any incident where community members declare that their annual medical treatment bills have gradually gone down due to water, sanitation and better hygiene behaviour or any such incident where para-medical

staff give data of reduction of water & sanitation related diseases.

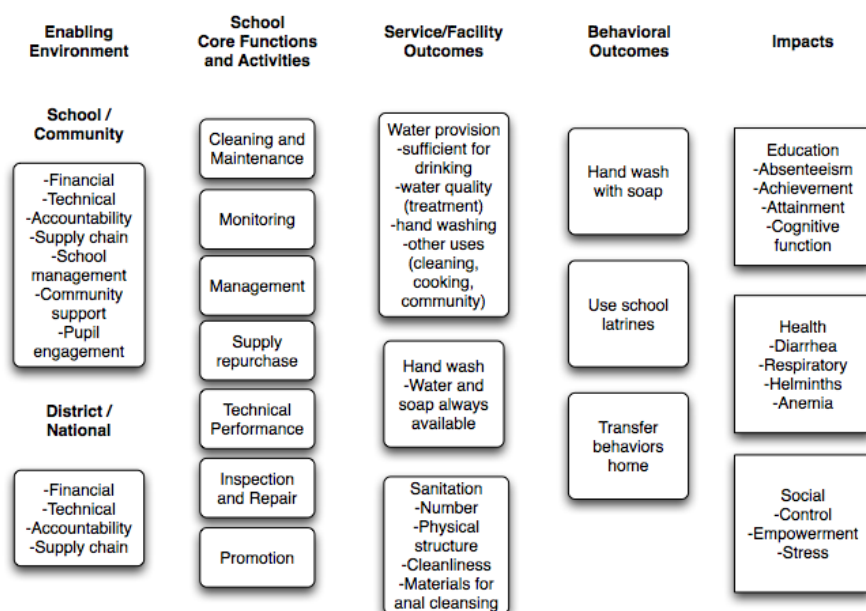
We are looking for your interesting WASH in schools success stories. Note that your story should be around 200 words and fit into one of the following categories:

1. WASH+ Health
2. WASH+ Education
3. WASH+ Gender
4. WASH+ Economy

For more information contact: Murat Sahin, Advisor, WASH in Schools, UNICEF New York, msahin@unicef.org

## Local Authorities and WASH in schools

Figure 1 - Conceptual Framework for School WASH Monitoring and Evaluation



The framework describes two additional levels needed to reach the desired impact. First, there is a set of 'core functions and activities' that schools must do on a regular basis for the facilities and behaviour changes to be sustained. These relate to e.g. management, maintenance and promotion. Secondly, there a number of factors within the school and beyond that create an 'enabling environment' that allows schools to be more successful in sustaining the improvements. While some of these are within the control of the school, others are not.

The above conceptual framework for the **effectiveness and sustainability of school WASH interventions** as developed for Dubai Cares by IRC and Emory University describes how at the school level, projects lead to the installation and maintenance of basic hardware components and promotional activities to improve 'service delivery outcomes' such as soap and water for hand washing, clean and safe latrines, and sufficient safe water for drinking. In addition, it is expected that programs will lead to a series of 'behavioural outcomes' including children washing their hands with soap, using latrines, consuming safe water, and catalysing behaviour change at home. The combination of service delivery and behavioural outcomes are expected to lead to impacts on health, education and wellbeing.

One important question in this is to determine the role of local governments for sustainability of WASH in schools interventions. The local education officials may be more concerned with education reform. The Public Health Engineering Department may be more focused on constructing community water supply. The local health officials may be more involved in curative medicine than in preventive health education programmes for children. Given this reality, one approach is to combine available resources under one agency and to demonstrate that WASH in Schools can be important for the specific ministry or department to achieve their respective objectives. In many countries because of decentralization policies, government funds for setting, achieving and maintaining the interventions will be provided through local authorities.

As shown in the diagram, local authorities can ensure maximum harmonisation at the community level through coordination of services and resources available for a school project, monitoring of the implementation through its routine monitoring or inspection processes, train teachers and school directors as well as through advocacy and collaboration with higher levels of authority. An important role which is still too often forgotten.

For more information on the role of local authorities in WASH in schools refer to UNICEF/IRC publication “*Towards effective programming for WASH in Schools*” which can be found at <http://www.irc.nl/page/37621>.

Examples of potential stakeholders and how these influence WASH in Schools strategies <sup>1</sup>			
If the lead institution is:	Examples:	Focus and advantages can be:	Problems to watch out for:
Community	Village development committee etc.	Good community involvement	Small scale, hard to disseminate
The School	School health committee, PTA	Programs are sustained. Behavioural change. Good fit with local situation.	Small-scale, hard to disseminate
Education	Local Education Department	Focus on behaviours. Suitable school curriculum. Hygiene can appear as examination subject. Easier access to teachers and trainers. WASH in schools can be a vehicle for educational reform.	Quality of construction. Maintenance and use of facilities. Community involvement.
Health	Local Health Department	Focus on worm infestation, diarrheal, eye and skin infections. HIV/AIDS education can be integrated into WASH in schools.	Education inputs in classroom. Quality of construction. Community involvement. Maintenance and use of facilities.
NGO	NGO working in sanitation or social sector programs	Flexibility in planning + implementation.	Weak links with Education or local government. Maintenance and use of facilities after NGO leaves.
Mass organization (CBO)	Red Cross, Women's Organizations	Volunteers can be mobilized. Community involvement.	Weak links with Education, Health, WASH authorities.
Water and sanitation	UNICEF - WASH, Public health or water department	Rapid construction. WASH in schools can be entry point for increasing latrine coverage and use in the community.	Links with Education. Community involvement. Maintenance and use of facilities.
Project	Externally-supported project	Funding assured in the project area	Links with Education, Health authorities. Maintenance and use of facilities.

1. From the soon to be published UNICEF Manual for WASH in schools in South Asia

## Faith in water: WASH in schools in faith-based schools

For more information contact: Christine Sijbesma, IRC, the Netherlands, [sybesma@irc.nl](mailto:sybesma@irc.nl)

More than 50% of all schools worldwide have either been founded and are operated by faiths or have some role for faiths within their educational systems. The potential impact of faith-based education on the environment and health is large. Moreover, the cooperation between the faiths offers a unique opportunity to enhance common values and to strengthen inter-faith dialogue and cooperation, instead of emphasising inter-faith differences, tension and conflicts.

From 5-7 July 2009, ARC (the Alliance of Religions and Conservation), EMF (the Ecological Management Foundation) and IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre with financial support from UNICEF hosted an international workshop entitled **Faith in Water** in Salisbury, U.K. Some 40 religious leaders, educators, development specialists, water and sanitation experts and innovators participated. It was the start of a new and exciting opportunity to build on the shared commitment of the Buddhist, Catholic, Hinduism, Jewish, Muslim and Protestant Christian and Zoroastrian faiths to respect and preserve water and the environment and improve health by fostering good practices and long lasting behavioural transformations of school-going children and their educators and parents.

The objectives of the workshop were:

- To explore what the faiths – as powerful advocates of the environment – and faith-based schools in particular

are doing to promote sanitation and hygiene as well as conservation of water sources and provision of drinking water in schools;

- To get position statements from the faiths on their theological understanding of water, sanitation and hygiene as a basis for practical action; and
- To produce an inspiring Guidebook for the faiths and secular organisations working to improve water supply and resources, sanitation and hygiene in their schools programmes (due for Autumn 2009).

At the end of the three day workshop, the following follow-up actions were agreed on:

1. Endorsement of concerns and focus on Water, Sanitation and the Environment by the Faith Communities.
2. Participation in major sector events.
3. Formulation of a movement or programme for WASH in Faith-related education.
4. Enhancing of knowledge sharing.
5. Formation of an Alliance which can become a Partner to UN Water.

Longer-term objectives are to strengthen ties between individuals and organisations who are powerful advocates for water and the environment and to explore the potential for collaborative work of faith groups and secular agencies in this subject field.

# “Menstruation and School Girls”: current and future initiatives

By Dr. Marni Sommer, DrPH, MSN, RN, Assistant Professor of Socio-medical Sciences, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, and Managing Editor, 'Global Public Health', New York City, USA, marni.sommer@gmail.com

In the April 2008 Notes & News issue, the author highlighted key factors for approaching the menstruation and puberty challenges that arise for girls in school, such as the importance of culturally-sensitive approaches and quality evaluation of interventions. In this article she highlights current initiatives, with recommendations for future directions.

The content of this article was conceived of by the author and Dr. Jackie Kirk in July 2008, two weeks before she was killed in Afghanistan. Jackie was a tireless advocate for the rights of girls around the globe, and was in Afghanistan providing technical support for a girls' education project. Her inspiring vision, limitless energy, and passion for working for the rights of girls, is sorely missed around the globe. Her work will live on after her.

## Introduction

In recent years, there has been growing attention to the unique needs of girls as they transition through puberty in schools that are potentially “girl unfriendly” in developing countries. Interest has focused in particular on the onset of menstruation, and the need to make schools more supportive of girls managing menses. Although attention to the needs of boys as they transition into young men is of equal importance, girls' menstrual management requirements, both in terms of sanitary facilities and pragmatic guidance on managing menstrual flow, must be addressed to assure girls have an equal chance of participating in the classroom every day of the school year, and of achieving academic success. The reasons for girls' school disruption around puberty are complex, yet certain challenges, such as helping girls to understand and manage the body changes of menstruation and puberty within the school environment, are within reach of pragmatic and affordable interventions.

This article reviews current initiatives and future directions.

## Current Initiatives

A typology of current initiatives includes activities emerging from academia, the development and emergency relief communities, and the private sector. The primary fields from which ideas and solutions are currently being generated include education, public health, and business. This typology does not attempt to be all inclusive, but rather aims to highlight the various approaches being implemented, and potential avenues for future directions.

The research initiatives to date have generally utilized qualitative, ethnographic, and case study methods and more recently quantitative measures. Although some educational survey research has queried girls about menstrual-related interruptions to their schooling, the sensitivity of the topic may have hindered the validity of the data collected. There is an overdue need for longitudinal research on girls' transitions through puberty in developing countries, and for quantitative measurement of the impact of menstrual and pubertal-related interventions on girls' school attendance and completion.



Educational material on menstrual management used by BRAC-WASH programme in Bangladesh

## Research

**Uganda, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Ghana:** The Rockefeller Foundation funded case study research of sexual maturation in schools in these countries, with findings indicating that the onset of menstruation and puberty introduce significant challenges for girls (and boys). The case studies highlighted a significant gap in sexual maturation information, and the need for improved water and sanitation in schools (<http://www.questafrica.org>).

**Tanzania:** The author (Dr. Sommer) conducted in-depth research on the intersection of menstruation and schooling, with a focus on capturing girls' voiced experiences of menarche, and the ways in which menstrual and pubertal onset may be disruptive to academic participation for social, cultural, physical management, or economic reasons. The research highlighted significant gaps in girls' pragmatic information around puberty and menstruation, and the insufficiency of current school environments (e.g. water and sanitation facilities, sensitized teachers and administration).

**Ghana:** Oxford University has embarked on exploratory research in Ghana on the challenges school girls face in managing menstruation and pubertal onset. Although the research is still in the preliminary phase, the diversity of girls' experiences, and the need for menstrual-related interventions, is already apparent.

**Nepal:** Researchers from the Universities of Chicago and Michigan conducted a randomized control trial in Nepal evaluating the uptake of the menstrual cups among adolescent school girls and its subsequent impact on girls' school attendance, test scores, reported self-esteem and gynecological health. The research highlighted the role of peer influence in assisting girls to learn how to use the menstrual cup correctly ([http://www.nber.org/authors/rebecca\\_thornton](http://www.nber.org/authors/rebecca_thornton)).

The interventions conducted to date have ranged from addressing girls' lack of sanitary materials, to the need for adequate water and sanitation facilities in schools. Projects have been challenged by the expense of modern sanitary pads, and with the need to identify local solutions for addressing social beliefs around menstruation and appropriate disposal of used sanitary materials. Approaches are needed that are low cost, incorporate quality evaluation, and respond holistically through the provision of menstrual management materials, pragmatic and culturally appropriate puberty information, adequate water and sanitation facilities, and that include suggestions for environmentally and culturally appropriate disposal.

## Intervention

**Zambia:** As part of a girls' education scholarship project, an American Institutes for Research project employed local women's groups to produce cloth-based reusable sanitary pads to place in "comfort kits" for school girls, to facilitate school attendance during menstruation ([www.air.org](http://www.air.org)).

**Eritrea:** The National Union of Eritrean Women and Catholic Relief Services implemented a girls' empowerment project aimed at addressing the gap in girls' reproductive health and hygiene knowledge, and at facilitating school attendance through the construction of adequate latrines and provision of sanitary materials.

**India:** The Vacha Women's Resource Centre worked to develop a teaching module for girls from poverty affected families to decrease girls' perceptions of menstruating bodies as polluting agents.

**Kenya:** Johnson & Johnson, in collaboration with researchers from Duke University, is supporting a girls' education project that aims to provide a more girl-friendly school environment. Key activities include supporting the construction of a girls' only school, the building of latrines, and the free provision sanitary materials (<http://globalhealth.duke.edu/news-events/global-health-news-at-duke/sanitary-pad>).

**Tanzania:** Through the support of the Nike Foundation, Dr. Sommer (the author) recently published 16,000 copies of a girl's puberty book entitled "Growth and Changes" aimed at 10-14 year olds to teach growing girls how to manage menstruation in school and about other pubertal body changes.

Many different business approaches are underway, some focusing on sanitary pad donation, school facility construction, and the provision of puberty information, while others focus on generating micro-finance opportunities for women that will lead to local production of cheaper sanitary materials. Creative and sustainable solutions are needed that bring business together with research and interventions emerging from the education and health sectors.

## Business

**Uganda:** Engineers at Makerere University developed the Maka Pad, a locally designed sanitary pad made of papyrus leaves, with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation, in an effort to make pads that are environmentally sensitive and more affordable to school girls (<http://www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?cid=5264&catid=510&typeid=24&subMenuId=0>).

**East and Southern Africa:** Proctor & Gamble (P&G) has projects underway that incorporate building latrines, providing sanitary pads, and teaching school girls about pubertal body change. Previously P&G launched an advertising campaign about girls' menstrual management needs in sub-Saharan Africa, and more recently formed a partnership called the "Always and Tampax Protecting Futures Program" between Always and Tampax, CARE, and Save the Children. The collaboration aims to provide one million girls with puberty education and sanitary pads to help them manage their period while in school as well as installing 500 sanitary facilities ([http://www.pg.com/news/clinton\\_global.shtml](http://www.pg.com/news/clinton_global.shtml)).

**Rwanda:** Sustainable Health Enterprises (SHE), a new social entrepreneurial organization, aimed at starting up female-run franchises that manufacture and distribute low priced, high quality, and eco-friendly sanitary napkins for domestic and international campaigns. Currently SHE is exploring a start-up project in Rwanda (<http://www.sheinnovates.com/index.html>).

**Bangladesh:** BRAC has projects underway that hire low-income women to produce sanitary materials for sale to girls and women within their communities, thereby providing both an income-generating activity, and improving girls' ability to manage menstruation during the school day ([www.brac.net](http://www.brac.net)).

**Sub-Saharan Africa:** The Canadian Organization for the Development of Education (CODE, Inc) is a procurement and logistics firm exploring the launch of a program that would provide female menstrual hygiene kits to girls and women in need ([www.codeinc.com](http://www.codeinc.com)).

At the policy level, both African women's groups and international agencies are beginning to address the topic of school girls' menstrual management needs in development and emergency settings. Collaboration is essential between practice (research, intervention, business) and policy to assure that global and national policies are grounded in girls' voiced experiences, and based on empirical data generated from effective and sustainable interventions.

## Policy

**Africa:** The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) in countries such as Uganda and Kenya has advocated for reduced tariffs on sanitary products being imported into countries; on the need for attention to sexual maturation in schools; and the challenges facing girls maturing into womanhood. FAWE chapters in additional countries are beginning to advocate on this issue ([www.fawe.org](http://www.fawe.org)).

**Globally-United Nations:** UNICEF is currently exploring the creation of a policy on menstrual hygiene in schools, for dissemination to field offices and partners around the world. UNFPA and UNHCR have also expressed growing concern with responses to menstrual management in emergencies, recognizing the lack of coordinated and systematic response to this critical issue for displaced girls and women.

## Future Directions

Clearly there is a broad range of initiatives underway from a diverse set of fields and organizations. There is a real need to capitalize on this momentum and to identify synergies among the various approaches, practitioners, and policy makers. The challenges facing menstruating school girls will not be solved by focusing only on school-based interventions, given the role of economic factors (e.g. affordable sanitary materials), country education resources, and social and cultural beliefs around menstruation and body change. A holistic response is required, with three essential criteria recommended for moving forward the menstruation and school girl agenda. These include:

1. Utilizing collaborative approaches at local (school/community), district and national level
2. Designing interdisciplinary activities at all levels ; and,
3. Capturing girls' voices in the design and implementation of research, practice and policy.

Prioritizing the unique needs of girls, to assure they can continue in school post-pubescence, is of the highest importance when aiming to reach the millennium development goals in education and health.

## News and Updates

### Global Hand Washing Day, 15 October 2009

Everyone can get involved in Global Handwashing Day celebrated at Thursday 15 October, 2009!



Initiated in 2008 by the Global Public-Private Partnership for Handwashing with Soap, Global Handwashing Day is endorsed by a wide array of governments, international institutions, civil society organizations, NGOs, private companies and individuals around the globe.

The objectives of this day are to:

- Foster and support a global and local culture of handwashing with soap.
- Shine a spotlight on the state of handwashing in each country.
- Raise awareness about the benefits of handwashing with soap.

Lots of resources, like a planning matrix, handwashing videos and events guides, are available at the Official Global Handwashing Day website: <http://www.globalhandwashingday.org/>. See how you can be involved!

### Regional Symposium: "Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Schools, 28-30 July 2009, Managua, Nicaragua

The event brought together over 60 professionals from 15 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean to share their experiences in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in schools, and became the first step in developing a common vision to lead these initiatives in scaling up at the national and regional levels. The symposium was organized jointly by Millennium Water Alliance partners in Central America (Water for People, CARE and Catholic Relief Service), Plan International and UNICEF (Regional and Nicaragua Offices).

As an outcome of the symposium the participants identified the following key needs: 1) information collection and sharing on the current status of WASH in schools, 2) systematisation of the existing experiences and impacts, 3) development of strategies and action plans for the integration of WASH in the agendas of national leaders. The enormous interest and commitment shown by the participants will be the catalyst of a coordinated work in the future. Therefore the symposium participants committed themselves to maintain and expand the network of regional

stakeholders involved in the development of activities in WASH in schools with the aim to come up with joint activities, commitments and policies for the individual countries and the region.

One of the first initiatives developed has been the setting up of a mailing list. The group in Spanish language is a discussion platform and place for information exchange, questions to other professionals and event announcements related to WASH in schools. A membership to the list can be applied at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WASHenEscuelas/>



### World Water Week "United for Children-WASH in Schools", 16-22 August 2009, Stockholm, Sweden

Building on the achievements and experiences in WASH in schools, a seminar entitled United for Children- WASH in schools was held at Stockholm August 14th. The session presented a number of concrete examples, case studies and experiences of successful WASH in schools programmes including Global Handwashing Day (GHD) and discuss how we can strengthen these initiatives and build on the lessons we have learned. Presentations of the session can be found on [www.worldwaterweek.org](http://www.worldwaterweek.org)

Despite the promising potential of WASH in Schools, the sub-sector has stagnated and there is now an urgent need to secure commitments to it. A key objective of the session was to discuss what advocacy efforts are needed at all levels to encourage greater interest and support to the sector and to achieve consensus on a proposed "call for action" (cited in the beginning of N&N) and strategy to generate greater commitments for WASH in Schools at all levels. Despite the fact that the session was on a Sunday morning, a lively discussion with numerous useful points on the development of the "call for action".

### School Led Total Sanitation experience from Nepal

Developed and implemented by UNICEF and the Government of Nepal since 2005, School-Led Total Sanitation (SLTS) draws on success elements from a wide range of Community Approaches to Total Sanitation

to create a complete package of sanitation and hygiene programming that begins at the school and extends through the community. Using participatory approaches, motivational tools, flexibility for innovation and building ownership at the local level, SLTS is accelerating latrine coverage across Nepal, and creating a social movement for communities to become open-defecation free (ODF).

As of June 2009, SLTS had reached approximately 90,000 households and 500,000 people in 15 districts through 300 schools. Over 1,000 settlements in 10 districts have been declared ODF. Three districts are on their way to declaring district-wide total sanitation. Based on its success, SLTS has been incorporated in the Nepal Sanitation Master Plan, developed in 2009, and the Government of Nepal is replicating the SLTS programme in all 75 districts. More countries such as Sierra Leone, Pakistan are adopting the SLTS approach and more are on the way.

The Guidelines on School Led Total Sanitation from the Nepal Steering Committee for National Sanitation Action, Department of Water Supply and Sewerage and UNICEF, Nepal can be downloaded at [http://www.unicef.org/wash/index\\_schools.html](http://www.unicef.org/wash/index_schools.html)

## New Publications

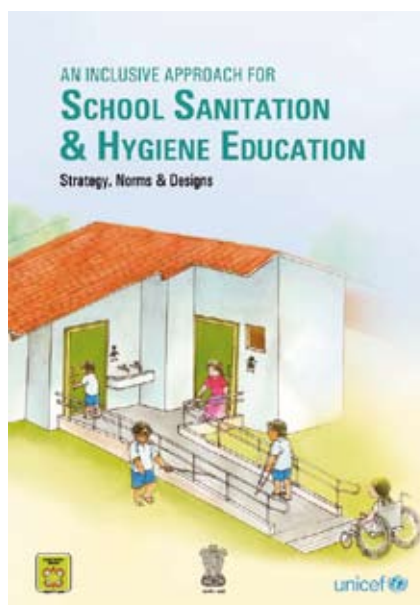
Due for Autumn 2009. *Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Standards for Schools in Low-cost Settings*, a WHO/ UNICEF publication by John Adams, Jamie Bartram, Yves Chartier and Jackie Sims. Copies can be obtained through: [bookorders@who.int](mailto:bookorders@who.int)

These guidelines offer a basis for creating the minimum conditions required for providing schooling in a healthy environment for schoolchildren, teachers and other staff. In the area of water supply, sanitation and hygiene, they can be used to:

1. Develop specific national standards that are relevant to various types of school in different contexts.

2. Support national standards and set specific targets at local level.
3. Assess the situation in existing schools, to evaluate the extent to which they may fall short of national standards and local targets.
4. Plan and carry out any improvements required.
5. Ensure that the construction of new schools is of acceptable quality.
6. Prepare and implement comprehensive and realistic action plans so that acceptable conditions are maintained.

*An inclusive approach for School Sanitation & Hygiene Education. Strategy, Norms & Designs*, published by the Department of Drinking Water Supply (DDWS) and the Department of Elementary Education and Literacy (DEEL), Government of India in collaboration with UNICEF.



Copies can be downloaded at: [http://ddws.gov.in/popups/SSHE\\_book%20Final%20PDF.pdf](http://ddws.gov.in/popups/SSHE_book%20Final%20PDF.pdf)

The new guidelines are based on technical and social guiding principles for designing of toilet blocks in schools. The designs provided have incorporated the user requirements of girls, boys and children with special needs.

## Subscription to WASH in Schools Notes & News

The WASH in Schools Notes & News will be distributed free of charge and is being financed by IRC and UNICEF. WASH in Schools. **Notes & News** will be distributed through mail or e-mail. In addition, all editions will also be made available on the school sanitation and hygiene education web site: <http://www.schools.watsan.net/>

To subscribe please contact IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre

By post:: P.O. Box 82327, 2508 EH, The Hague, The Netherlands.

By e-mail: [washinschools@irc.nl](mailto:washinschools@irc.nl) and/or [snel@irc.nl](mailto:snel@irc.nl)

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