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Notes & News

December 2009



Note from the editors

Almost 15 years after the first **Notes & News on WASH in Schools** (previously known as **SSHE**) was published, we are pleased to present you the second issue of this year. This issue touches upon three crucial questions when developing activities on WASH in Schools: 1. What are the evidences of impact? 2. What are the standards and design criteria to apply when constructing WASH facilities at schools? and 3. How can activities be financed?

We hope you enjoy your reading!

On behalf of IRC and UNICEF New York, the editors

Girls washing hands with soap

Evidence on the impact of WASH-in-schools

Compiled by Peter van Maanen, UNICEF, New York and Annemarieke Mooijman, WASH Consultant. For more information contact: pvanmaanen@unicef.org

Introduction

Several studies have focussed on the health and learning impact as well as issues related to socio-emotional impacts, and focus on dignity of WASH-in-schools. This article gives a summary of a selection of those studies, including very recent studies and can be used for advocacy purposes with authorities and organisations focussing on WASH and education. The studies highlighted focus on: 1. the impact on health and learning, 2. household tasks and absenteeism 3. the needs of adolescent girls and 4. long-term impacts.

Impact on health and learning

Learning, hygiene and health are all linked. Schools are also places where children get infected. Spreading of diseases can go very fast when schools are places where many children gather together for many hours a day in bad hygienic conditions. As illustrated in a study in Colombia from the 1970s there is a direct link between diarrhoea and hygiene in schools. In this study, more than 40% of the

cases of diarrhoea in schoolchildren were being attributed to school transmissions rather than transmission in homes. As a result, children miss school because they are sick or perform worse at school because they are not completely healthy and cannot concentrate etc. like they potentially could do.

Within WASH-in-schools, the focus is generally on diarrheal and worm infections because in magnitude these are the two main diseases that affect school-age children most and which can be drastically reduced through improved WASH-in-schools. Worldwide an estimated 1863 million schooldays can be gained annually due to less diarrhoeal illness if everyone in the world had access to a regular piped water supply and sewage connection in their houses .

The causes of diarrhoea include a wide array of viruses, bacteria, and parasites. Diarrhoeal disease affects far more individuals than any other illness, 88% of diarrheal disease is caused by unsafe water supply, inadequate sanitation and hygiene. And although diarrhoea seldom kills children



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.



above the age of five, it is certainly also an important issue for school-age children: it is the primary source of morbidity and therefore an important reason why children are absent from school. It is also an important reason for chronic under-nutrition and growth retardation.

The synergistic relationship between malnutrition and infection is clearly exacerbated in diarrhoeal episodes as children tend to eat less during episodes and their ability to absorb nutrients is reduced. Each episode contributes to malnutrition, reduced resistance to infections and when prolonged, to impaired growth and development .

Improving sanitation facilities has been associated with an estimated median reduction in diarrhoea incidence of 34%. Washing hands with soap is another important barrier to transmission and has been cited as one of the most cost-effective public health interventions. It can reduce the incidence of diarrhoeal disease by almost 40%. Accessible and plentiful water has also been shown to encourage better hygiene, and handwashing in particular.

Interventions to improve water quality at the source, along with treatment and safe storage systems at the point of use, reduce diarrhoea incidence by as much as 29%.

Worm infections are spread through unhygienic environments (soil or water) and unhygienic behaviour (through food or hands). 100% of all the annual cases worldwide of roundworm, whipworm and hookworm infestation are attributable to inadequate sanitation and hygiene

Those are the 3 main worms most commonly associated with malnutrition and disease in children. At times these worms are referred to as soil-transmitted helminthes, referring to their mode of transmission, as open defecation causes worms' eggs to be present on the soil. The hookworm,



however, is the only one to enter a human host by a (now) larvae penetrating through the human skin. Infection with the roundworms and whipworms happens when mature eggs are ingested through food or fingers. The impact of worms on nutritional status is more because of a

myriad of damage caused by a worm's harm done to the tissue of the gut, than due to the absorption of a hosts' food. Worm infections can be reduced by stopping the spread of infections by improved hygienic conditions in combination with treatment.

School children are often the group that has the highest infection rate (an estimated 47% of the children ages 5-9 in the developing world suffer from a worm infection) as well as the highest worm burden because worms are easily spread among groups of children who play together and touch each other, visit toilet and do not wash hands with soap afterwards. Worms are one of the world's most important causes of physical and intellectual growth retardation. It is estimated that over 200 million school children suffer from iron deficiency anaemia (IDA) caused by worm infestation. The impact of worm reduction programs in schools has been remarkable: a study in Jamaica found that children who were treated against a worm infection perform much better in school than children who did not received treatment.

Household tasks and absenteeism

Many children arrive late to school because they have to walk long distances in order to fetch water. Project evaluations and research has found a 15% increase in school attendance in Bangladesh, when water was available within a fifteen-minute walk compared to one of an hour or more. Similarly, a study in Tanzania showed a 12% increase in school attendance when water was available within 15

Lack of handwashing in primary schools

- In Kenya a WASH-in-schools evaluation reports that only 5 out of 100 schools had soap available for children. Less than 2% (only 21 out of 951 of the children) were observed to wash their hands with soap.
- An evaluation conducted in India shows that handwashing before eating in the school was far more frequent in districts with UNICEF WASH supported WASH-in-school programmes than in control districts. However soap was very seldom used when washing hands (2% or less of the children), which seriously compromises the effectiveness of handwashing.
- A six country evaluation a WASH-in-schools pilot programme in Burkina Faso, Colombia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Vietnam and Zambia the availability of soap was a major problem in most of the schools. "This jeopardizes the educational effort promoting the use of soap and results in a low proportion of students washing hands with soap. Soap is not available for various reasons such as for fear of it getting stolen or because it is too expensive for the school to buy. This is an area of great concern".

minutes instead of being more than an hour away. It is also interesting to cite that when the teacher sends children to fetch water, typically girls are being sent. When other family members become sick, often due to water and sanitation related diseases, girls are more likely to be kept home from school to help.

Needs of adolescent girls

Increasingly, evidence is available that the absence of toilets or of separate toilets in schools for girls is an important reason for parents not to send girls to school. If adolescent girls attend schools during their menstruation, the availability of girls-appropriate toilets and water supply is essential to comfortably change and dispose of sanitary pads and wash themselves in privacy. If not available, adolescent girls may be unable to remain comfortably in class. Although so far scientific evidence is limited, the lack of sanitary protection during menstruation is often mentioned by the girls as a barrier to their regular attendance in school (in reality this might also be motivated by religious and cultural beliefs and habits).

This situation means that for many girls and young women it is preferable to stay at home during menstruation and not attend school at all. At home they do not have to worry as much about sanitary protection, nor about having adequately concealing clothing. Regular absence from school for several days a month (10-20% of all school days) can, even in the short term, have a negative impact on a girl's learning and therefore on her academic performance in school. Frequent absence will lead to insufficient learning for most girls and therefore poor results in the long term. Eventually this can even lead to dropping out completely.

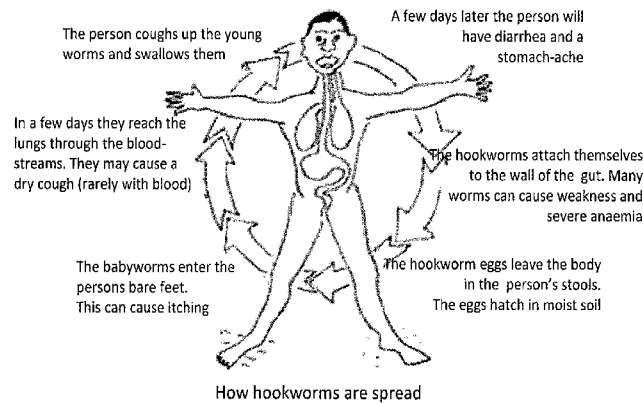
Besides dignity, the lack of girls in school is particularly damaging to the economy of a country. Research shows that for every 10% increase in female literacy, a country's economy can grow by 0.3%. Educated girls are more likely to raise healthy, well-nourished, educated children, to protect themselves from exploitation and AIDS, and to develop skills to contribute to their societies. Educating girls is good economics, and you can't do it without improved water and sanitation.

The number of children across the world subjected to sexual abuse is shocking. The World Health Organization (2002) estimated that 150 million girls and 73 million boys under the age of 18 had been raped or suffered other forms of sexual violence. There are currently no reliable estimates of how much of this abuse takes place in or around schools. This is in large part due to the shame felt by the victims and the lack

of confidence that reporting the incident will lead to action against the perpetrator.

In many schools girls face threat of sexual violence from both male teachers and older male students. Studies show that girls are most likely to be abused on their journey to or from school, in or near toilets, empty classrooms and other isolated places. Research in Uganda found that 8% of 16 and 17 year-old boys and girls questioned had had sex with their teachers and 12% with ancillary. In Zambia, one third of students aged 13 to 15 years reported having been physically forced to have sexual intercourse. A Latin America consultation found that, like their peers in Africa, girls in the

Dominican Republic, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama experience sexual coercion from teachers, sometimes with threats that their grades will suffer if they do not cooperate. There is limited information about sexual abuse in schools in Asia, but there is evidence that also there there is a problem with sexual abuse in schools. This all shows that it is important to construct toilets at safe locations.



Another problem for adolescents is that school curricula typically do not cover the topic of menstruation and puberty in a very girl-friendly way, and so do not help girls to understand the changes in their maturing bodies. Many biology text books instead contain sexless bodies and make no reference to feminine and menstrual hygiene, male hygiene, body awareness, maturation process and changes during puberty, leaving girls (and boys) ignorant about the topic.

Long-term impacts

In a study on the long-term effect of community hygiene education programs for both adults and children, it was found that new behaviours do not fade as years go by, with people reverting to earlier, less hygienic practices. Rather, data demonstrate that hygiene behaviours are sustained beyond the end of an intervention. For five countries, 25 comparisons were made between hygiene behaviour and the end date of the program. The results showed that even where the program had ended 7 or 9 years before the survey, about 4 out of 5 (80%) of the women were reportedly still consistently using their latrines.

Researchers suppose that handwashing, like toothbrushing, occurs as component part of daily routines and that these routines are often established from childhood. Therefore, schools form an ideal setting for hygiene education to take place, where children can learn and sustain adequate lifelong hygiene practices.

Conclusion

The evidence is compelling, but still there is need for more information (particularly linked to economic aspects and the association between girls' absence, menstrual management and adequate WASH facilities in schools). We encourage our readers to share with us any evidence-based programme evaluations or when this has not yet been done we encourage you to start conducting them.

For the list of references please refer to: www.schools.watsan.net/



Adolescent Girls Meeting, Bangladesh.

Water, sanitation and hygiene standards for schools in low-cost settings

The World Health Organization and UNICEF recently published “Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Standards for Schools in Low-cost settings”. The full publication can be downloaded from: http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/wash_standards_school.pdf.

WHO UNICEF Guidelines on minimum standards on WASH in Schools

The adequate provision of water supply, sanitation, hygiene and waste management in schools is a WHO priority area since it has a number of positive effects and contributes to a reduced burden of disease among children, staff and their families. Such interventions provide opportunities for greater gender equity in access to education, and create educational opportunities to promote safe environments at home and in communities. This guide is designed to be used in low-cost settings in low-and medium resource countries and to support the implementation of national policies. It is aimed at education managers and planners, architects, urban planners, water and sanitation technicians, teaching staff, school board, village education committees, local authorities and similar bodies.

This is based on the recent WHO and UNICEF publication entitled “Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Standards for Schools in Low-cost Settings”. The following are the key indicators which have been established:

1. Water supply

1.1 **Water quality:** Water for drinking, cooking, personal hygiene, cleaning and laundry is safe for the purpose intended.

Indicators

- Microbiological quality of drinking-water. Escherichia coli or thermotolerant coliform bacteria are not detectable in any 100-ml sample.
- Treatment of drinking-water. Drinking-water from unprotected sources is treated to ensure microbiological safety.

- Chemical and radiological quality of drinking-water. Water meets WHO Guidelines for drinking-water quality or national standards concerning chemical and radiological parameters.
- Acceptability of drinking-water. There are no tastes, odours or colours that would discourage consumption of the water.
- Water for other purposes. Water that is not of drinking-water quality is used only for cleaning, laundry and sanitation.

1.2 **Water quantity:** Sufficient water is available at all times for drinking, personal hygiene, food preparation, cleaning and laundry.

Indicators

- Basic quantities of water required.

Day schools	5 litres/day/person for all schoolchildren and staff
Boarding schools	20 litres/day/person for all residential schoolchildren and staff
Nonresidential schoolchildren and staff	5 l litres/day/person

- Additional quantities of water required. Figures given are for day schools. They should be doubled for boarding schools

Flushing toilets	10–20 litres/day/person for conventional flushing toilets
Pour-flush toilets	1.5–3.0 litres/day/person
Anal washing	1–2 litres/day/person

1.3 **Water facilities and access to water:** Sufficient water-collection points and water-use facilities are available in the school to allow convenient access to, and use of,

water for drinking, personal hygiene, food preparation, cleaning and laundry.

Indicators

- A reliable water point, with soap is available at all the critical points within the school, particularly in toilets and kitchens.
- A reliable drinking-water point is accessible for staff and schoolchildren, including those with disabilities, at all times.
- One shower for 20 users in boarding schools (users include schoolchildren and residential staff). Separate showers, or separate showering times, are designated for staff and schoolchildren, and separate showers or times are designated for boys and girls. At least one shower should be accessible for females with disabilities and one for males with disabilities.
- Laundry facilities, with soap or detergent and hot water or chlorine solution (or both), are provided in boarding schools.

2. Hygiene Promotion

Correct use and maintenance of water and sanitation facilities is ensured through sustained hygiene promotion. Water and sanitation facilities are used as resources for improved hygiene behaviours.

Indicators

- Hygiene education is included in the school curriculum.
- Positive hygiene behaviours, including correct use and maintenance of facilities, are systematically promoted among staff and schoolchildren.
- Facilities and resources enable staff and schoolchildren to practice behaviours that control disease transmission in an easy and timely way.

3. Sanitation

Sufficient, accessible, private, secure, clean and culturally appropriate toilets are provided for schoolchildren and staff.

Indicators

- Sufficient toilets are available: 1:25 girls and one for female staff; one toilet plus one urinal (or 50 cm of urinal wall) per 50 boys, and one for male staff.
- Toilets are easily accessible to all, including staff and children with disabilities — no more than 30 m from all users. Male and female toilets are completely separated.
- Toilets provide privacy and security.
- Toilets are appropriate to local cultural and social conditions, are age and gender appropriate and accessible for children with disabilities or suffering from chronic diseases (i.e. toilets are child friendly).
- Toilets are hygienic to use and easy to clean.
- Toilets have convenient handwashing facilities close by.
- A cleaning and maintenance routine is in operation, and ensures that clean and functioning toilets are available at all times.

4. Control of Vector-borne Disease

Schoolchildren, staff and visitors are protected from disease vectors.

Indicators

- The density of vectors in the school is minimized.
- Schoolchildren and staff are protected from potentially disease-transmitting vectors.
- Vectors are prevented from contact with schoolchildren and staff or substances infected with related vector-borne diseases.

5. Cleaning and Waste Disposal

The school environment is kept clean and safe.

Indicators

- Classrooms and other teaching areas are regularly cleaned, to minimize dust and moulds.
- Outside and inside areas are maintained free of sharp objects and other physical hazards.
- Solid waste is collected from classrooms, kitchens and offices daily and is disposed of safely.
- Wastewater is disposed of quickly and safely.

6. Food Storage and Preparation

Food for schoolchildren and staff is stored and prepared so as to minimize the risk of disease transmission.

Indicators

- Food is handled and prepared with utmost cleanliness (hand are washed before preparing food).
- Contact between raw foodstuffs and cooked food is avoided.
- Food is cooked thoroughly.
- Food is kept at safe temperatures.
- Safe water and safe raw ingredients are used.

For more information contact: Mr. Yves Chartier, WHO Geneva, chartieri@who.int.



School class outside, Nicaragua.

A development fund and ecological sanitation for WASH in schools

For more information contact: Ms. Saskia Geling, Senior Programme Officer Simavi, saskia.geling@simavi.nl

In **Notes & News** of April 2008, a short note was published on the setting up of a School Sanitation Fund by the NGO Simavi¹ to mark the International Year of Sanitation 2008. For appropriate implementation in the South cooperation with WASTE² was established to combine the ecological sanitation and training expertise of the partner organizations of WASTE and the implementation expertise of the partner organizations of Simavi. The Fund provided grants of up to € 15,000 (app. US\$ 22,500) for rural school sanitation projects to Simavi partners in Africa and Asia. The aim was to enable their Southern partners to initiate integrated sustainable school sanitation projects and to create awareness and inform the Dutch public on the subject.

The School Sanitation Fund was established by the end of 2007. At that time all the partners and interested NGOs were invited to collaborate on school sanitation. From that moment Simavi also started to raise funds from Dutch organisations and individuals specifically for this Fund.

The deadline for application for this Fund was May 2008. By then Simavi had received over 200 applications (50% from Africa and 50% from Asia) from which 85 were from Simavi's partners. The School Sanitation Committee (3 staff members of Simavi and 1 from WASTE) assessed all proposals. Unfortunately the School Sanitation Fund was too limited to approve all good proposals. At first € 300,000 was reserved

but was later increased to approximately € 400,000. Out of the 200 applications, the committee approved 26 projects. In India, Tanzania (see box below), and Malawi/Zambia, trainings on ecological sanitation were organized by partner organizations of WASTE. These trainings were financed by the Dutch water board Hunze & Aa's and by Plieger Ltd., a Dutch wholesale enterprise in sanitary, heating and electronic equipment. It is planned that after finalizing most projects Simavi will share an overview of the School Sanitation Fund and the learnings from the approved projects by end of 2009.

The success

The development fund has proven to stimulate a wide variety of innovative approaches for both local development and advocacy. The enormous interest and success of Simavi's School Sanitation Fund shows the need for funds to support small-scale initiatives for WASH-in-Schools. Based on the positive experiences and high demands from the field; Simavi, WASTE and ICCO (as 'coalition') are now planning to improve their WASH support to schools in six countries in Africa (Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Ghana, Uganda). The aim is to develop a joint program that is supposed to improve synergy within existing relevant local activities, policies and practices.

An example: Vocational training for youth on construction of ecological sanitation in Tanzania

The Iringa Development of Youth, Disabled & Child Care (IDYDC) in Iringa, Tanzania, deserves recognition for its innovative approach to address sanitation in a sustainable way through vocational training of youth. In a country where only an estimated 43%³ of the rural population has access to "improved sanitation". With a contribution of less than US\$ 17.000, 57 young people were trained to become sanitation entrepreneurs through increase of the demand for sanitation, the up-grading of its quality and the establishment of sustainable delivery mechanisms. The vocational training package was comprehensive, ranging from masonry skills to adoption of social marketing techniques in sanitation promotion, to hygiene education as well as knowledge of available technology and business strategies. During the training:

- All participants managed to acquire the required skills for proper production of SanPlat slabs using plastic moulds, and construction of different types of toilets.
- All participants were involved fully from the first to the last day with effort and enthusiasm.
- Another important aspect was the commitment of the teachers who participated the training. They were eager to learn new technical options and also they were ready to train others on what they knew.
- Hand wash containers were provided to schools and 10 demonstration units were constructed consisting of urine diverting, SanPlat latrines and pour flush toilets.



Concrete urine diverting EcoSan squatting pan made by the participants

Others

Simavi's School Sanitation Fund is an example of an earmarked fund (that is meant for use for a specific (sub) sector or purpose). As far as known the fund is quite unique in that it is especially meant to improve sanitation, water and hygiene in schools. Funds for improving access to

sanitation which also allocate funds for school sanitation are more common. An example is Dubai Cares <http://www.dubaicarees.ae/> where funds go to improving education and infrastructure, such as toilets and fences to make schools safe places for learning and increase school enrolment and attendance. In 2009, Dubai Cares made poor or inaccessible water and lack of sanitation a focus area.

1. Simavi, a Dutch based NGO, strives to break the vicious circle of poverty-disease and thereby contribute to the worldwide effort to realise the right of every person to optimum health more on Simavi: <http://www.simavi.org>
2. a Dutch NGO with expertise in ecological sanitation (<http://www.waste.nl>)
3. Source WHO and UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) for water supply and sanitation http://www.wssinfo.org/pdf/country/TZA_san.pdf

News and Updates

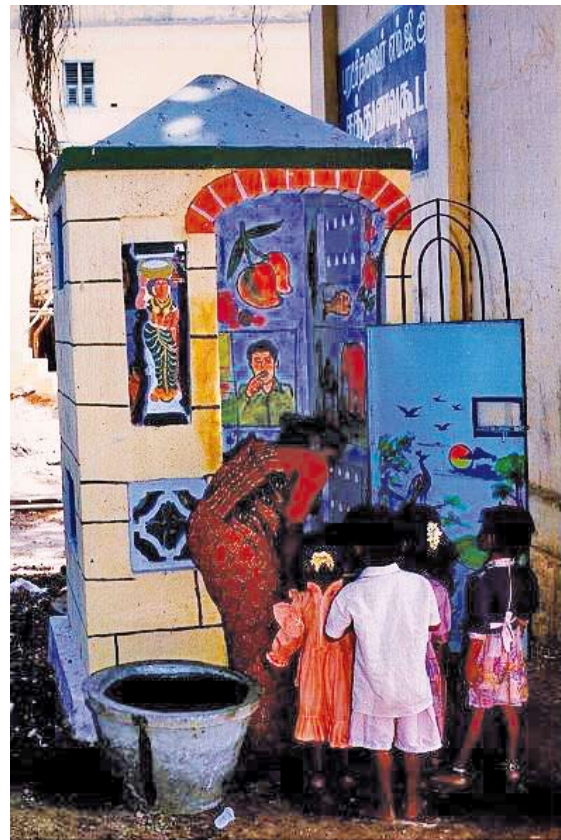
For All WASH in Schools professionals: CALL for Action on WASH in Schools

As announced in the previous issue of Notes and News, UNICEF, WHO, Water Advocates, Water For People, IRC, Emory University, Save The children, CARE, Water Aid and Dubai Cares have started to work on Call to Action on WASH in Schools. Experts from those agencies are working on a publication named "Call to Action in WASH-in-Schools". The publication will be targeting primarily global policy makers, colleagues in the education and health sector, worldwide press, corporations and foundations to promote the message to colleagues that it is time to act on WASH in Schools.

An advocacy and communication pack will be also developed and Call to Action on WASH in Schools will be launched during first quarter of 2010.

It is important to identify key national, regional and global events to tap in for Call to Action for WASH in Schools advocacy. Therefore we are asking partners to explore events planned for 2010 and advocate for creating a space for WASH in Schools. You may also share your events calendar on WASH in Schools with us so that we can highlight them at the global campaign on WASH in Schools.

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



Young children examining their colourfully painted toilet

Global campaign: Learn without Fear

Violence in schools is a truly global problem. The violence may be corporal punishment, sexual abuse, neglect, verbal and emotional abuse, bullying, peer-to-peer violence, youth gangs, weapons or harassment on the journey to and from school. Those cruel and humiliating forms of psychological punishment, gender-based violence and bullying remain a daily reality for millions of children. Plan International recently launched a campaign called "Learn without Fear" to achieve a world where children can go to school in safety and expect a quality learning experience without fear or threats of violence. It targets 3 of the most common and damaging forms of violence in schools: sexual violence, bullying and

corporal punishment.... violence which often takes place in the isolated location of a school toilet or water point!!

The key aims of the campaign include:

- Persuading governments to outlaw all forms of violence against children in school, and to enforce those laws.
- Working with school leaders and teachers to create violence-free schools and promote alternative discipline methods to corporal punishment.
- Creating a global momentum for change, including increased resources from international donors and governments to tackle violence in schools in developing countries.

For more information and the campaign report: <http://plan-international.org/learnwithoutfear/the-campaign>

Global Handwashing Day 2009 successful!

Global Handwashing Day was celebrated this year in nearly 80 countries, reaching roughly 200 million children in over 100,000 schools. The variety of activities and materials produced were impressive; nearly every conceivable method of communication was used.

Songs in Angola, dramas in Indonesia, sports games in Chad, and street fairs in Bolivia are just a



few examples of the innovative ways in which the message of *Handwashing with Soap* at critical times was spread around the world. An impressive 6 attempts at Guinness Book of World Records handwashing with soap records were attempted (with a possible new record of 50,000 children simultaneously washing their hands in Bangladesh), and there was even a direct link to an astronaut in space during the celebrations in Mali!

H1N1 (swine flu) messaging added a new element to many of this year's Global Handwashing Day celebrations, with most countries producing original materials related to H1N1 preparedness messaging, and emphasizing Handwashing with Soap at critical times as a major preventative measure during pandemics. Global Handwashing Day was reported as adding extra momentum to pandemic preparedness initiatives (and vice versa). To further supplement information about actions taken in terms of pandemic preparedness, UNICEF New York initiated a survey which was sent out to all Global Handwashing Day countries seeking materials and documentation of activities incorporating H1N1 into Global Handwashing Day. Feedback is ongoing, and materials will be stored and made available for use for potential future pandemic messaging emphasizing the critical importance of *Handwashing with Soap* as an inexpensive, quick and easy

'do it yourself' preventative measure. In reporting, most countries stated the original planned outcome of "increased awareness and practice of Handwashing with Soap" was reached and target populations (children and schoolchildren in particular) embraced the disseminated message.

Moving into the future and Global Handwashing Day 2010, consultations are ongoing regarding the experiences, lessons learned, and best practices of participating countries, with strategies into expanding Global Handwashing Day and *Handwashing with Soap* into a scaled up, year round initiative. Using the momentum gained for Global Handwashing Day 2009 (and with the critical importance of Handwashing with Soap in preventing H1N1), efforts in creating more effective behavioral and social change, with lasting impacts, will be a focus.



Boys washing hands after toilet use.

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/>

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