



The need for water and sanitation in schools, health centres and at the workplace

WASH targets for institutional settings should be part of the post-2015 development agenda.

What is it all about?

With the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) coming to an end in 2015, discussions regarding the post-MDG period have started. A UN technical working group has proposed post-2015 WASH targets and indicators to cover the period 2015-2040 ¹. The High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons have proposed a set of targets in 2013 ². And the Open Working Group (OWG) has finalised its discussions and proposed a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals last July ³. In the final proposal of the OWG, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities separate from household access are no longer addressed.

Why is institutional WASH so important?

Access to WASH facilities at home is simply not enough to achieve complete behavioural change and sustainable impact. The availability of WASH facilities at schools for both students and teachers is of critical importance, especially for girls at menstruating age. WASH services at health centres are vital in preventing infections and other diseases. In addition, the availability of WASH facilities at the workplace is fundamental so that people are able to work in a healthy and safe environment.

KEY FACTS

WASH IN SCHOOLS: Girls are more likely to be out of school than boys, with a wider gender gap in lower secondary school. Part of this disparity is attributed to a lack of separate WASH facilities at schools, especially for girls during menstruation age. Menstrual hygiene is fundamental to the dignity and wellbeing of school girls and an important part of the basic hygiene and sanitation to which every girl has a right ⁴. The availability of WASH services and hygiene education in schools is also important for achieving behavioural change of children and their parents.

WASH IN HEALTH CENTRES: Available data suggest that WASH services in health centres are inadequate in many countries. A forthcoming WHO report, found that in Sub Saharan Africa, only half of the health centres have access to improved water sources. This figure masks large variations and does not address issues concerning quality, functionality, and accessibility of services. Furthermore, little is known about the presence and conditions of sufficient sanitation facilities as well as safe disposal of medical waste ⁵.

WASH AT THE WORKPLACE: For every US\$ 1 invested in water and sanitation, US\$ 4.30 is generated in economic returns through increased productivity. There is a compelling and clear economic case for businesses to therefore demonstrate leadership by improving WASH at the workplace. Investing in WASH at the workplace means healthier and more productive employees, increased brand value, and lower reputational risks ⁶.

WHICH TARGETS SHOULD BE INCLUDED?

General WASH targets, based on the proposal of the Open Working Group:

6.1 by 2030, achieve the realisation of the human right to water through universal and equal equitable access to available, safe and affordable drinking water for all - in homes, schools, workplaces, health centers and refugee camps, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.

6.2 by 2030, achieve the realisation of the human right to sanitation through universal and equal access to adequate, affordable, acceptable and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all - in homes, schools, health centres and refugee camps, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations - and end open defecation.

Proposed WASH in school targets 7:

- Basic drinking water service of 5 liters per day per pupil from a functional water source on school premises.
- Gender disaggregated toilets with bins with lid in girls washrooms (no more than 98 boy pupils per urinal + 55 boys per latrine and 12 girls per urinal slot and 33 girls per latrine).
- Handwashing facility with soap and water in or near the sanitation facility.

Proposed WASH in health centre targets 8:

- Basic drinking water service of 5 liters per day per patient and staff from a functional water source on the health centre premises. In addition, availability of safe water for other functional purposes such as cleaning of medical equipment, floors, etc. on facility premises.
- Gender disaggregated toilets with bins with lids in women and girls' washrooms.
- Handwashing facility with soap and water in or near the sanitation facility and delivery room/operation room.

Proposed WASH at the workplace targets:

- Companies provide and maintain access to safe drinking water, appropriate sanitation facilities to allow for proper hygiene at the workplace, and build awareness for hygienic behavior.

How can I be involved?

If you feel that it is important to have targets for WASH in schools, health centres and at workplaces in the SDGs then please bring it up in discussions with colleagues, and officials, lobby in parliament, give advice, etc. Simavi and IRC are planning to organise a side event at a major conference in 2015 and are looking for collaboration.

Where can I find more info?

Through the following link <http://www.ircwash.org/resources/case-studies-institutional-wash> you can find more information about the importance of WASH in schools, health care facilities, and WASH at the workplace including relevant facts and figures. If you have further specific questions, please contact Marielle Snel from IRC at snel@ircwash.org or Roel Blesgraaf from Simavi at roel.blesgraaf@simavi.nl.

IMPORTANT DATES

December 12 :
EU Foreign Affairs Council,
Brussels

March 22:
World Water Day

April 12-17:
7th World Water Forum,
Daegu, Korea

July 13-16:
Third International Conference on
Finance for Development,
Addis Ababa

August 22-28:
World Water Week,
Stockholm

September 21-23:
United Nations High-Level
Post-2015 Summit,
New York

References

- 1 - See http://www.unicef.org/wash/files/4_WSSCC_JMP_Fact_Sheets_4_UK_LoRes.pdf
- 2 - See <http://www.post2015hlp.org/the-report/>
- 3 - See <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html>
- 4 - See <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/report-2013/mdg-report-2013-english.pdf>
- 5 - See <http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/9241560487.pdf>
- 6 - See <http://www.wbcsd.org/washatworkplace.aspx>
- 7 - Crook. R. 2013. Post-2015: Monitoring drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) beyond the household
- 8 - Crook. R. 2013. Post-2015: Monitoring drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) beyond the household

Co-authors



Signatories

