

CASE ON WASH ACCOUNTABILITY AT PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL (August 2010)

The Jopomwocho Primary School Case (Zombo (Nebbi) district, Paidha Sub-county)

WASH Security Committee at JOPOMWOCHO PRIMARY SCHOOL

Summary

The Jopomwocho Primary School faced serious vandalism of school property including the latrine facilities. The school representatives attended an Accountability Dialogue at Sub-county level. They got motivated to tackle their school security problems rather than asking the pupils to express their satisfaction over the school sanitation. A School Security Committee was established as a result and political support was given. A watchman was recruited and the situation improved directly, also as a result of more communication within the community. Challenges on financing and handling the 'difficult' villagers, remain.

Background

Jopomwocho Primary School is one of the 9 primary schools in Paidha Sub-County. It is located in Cana parish, Oryeo village in the new Zombo district (before part of Nebbi district). The school started way back in 1952 under the Catholic Mission and is currently under government control with classes from P1 to P7.

School motto: *Work hard for progress.*

Mission: *To equip children with qualitative knowledge, better attitudes and life skills that can eradicate poverty and illiteracy. Resulting in self-reliance and good citizens.*

The school has an enrolment of 978 children. It has 6 classrooms, 2 administrative offices and 1 store. The school has two latrine blocks each with 5 stances, one for boys and another for girls, and 1 block for teachers.

These school facilities frequently get vandalized when staff and pupils are not around, including breaking of glass windows, removal of iron bars from the windows, removal of doors and window shutters, stealing padlocks, playing in classrooms and trampling on the desks, destroying teaching materials, and sometimes defecating in the classrooms. There has been a loud noise from the surrounding community that the school and the general environment are not conducive for learning.

Participation of Jopomwocho Primary School in the Accountability Dialogue sessions

In March 2010 the Jopomwocho Primary School authorities attended the WASH accountability dialogue session at Sub-county level. The school representation was wide: the head teacher, chairman SMC, PTA chairman, health teacher and the health prefect. The water point at the school, also used by the community around, was represented by the JOPOMWOCHO school WSSC and some water users.

During the dialogue the children's school sanitation perception mood card was introduced (see website for tools). There, the school representatives learnt that the school can be protected from vandalism if the responsible people are given the role of promoting security and proper management of the school facilities. This was set as the main action point to follow up in order to improve school management and its property. It was felt that the scoring on sanitation satisfaction would not make sense where vandalism is that serious.

Formation of the School Security Committee

When back in the village, the SMC and the WSSC organized a meeting for the community around the school. The main agenda item was on matters pertaining to the destruction of school property. The key result of that meeting was that the vandalism at school would be addressed by the newly created School Security Committee (SSC). The participants selected nine core members for that SSC: two teachers, two local councillors (LC1 chairpersons from Oryeo village and Pambo village), two community members, two pupils and the school watchman.

Composition of the School Security Committee

| Name | Title | Position in SSC |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Osaga Vaerio | Teacher | Chairperson |
| Onegiu Mustafa Mulijeba | Parent | Vice person |
| Canpara John Bosco | Teacher | Secretary |
| Opar Alfred | Chairperson LC1 | Vice secretary |
| Mrs. Ongyera Nazarene | Parent | Treasurer |
| Bomba Luiyi | LC 1 Pambo | Member |
| Akekonnimungu Ester | Health pupil | Member |
| Onegagiu Emmaunel | Health pupil | Member |
| Omondi Rufwio | Parent | Watchman |

Resources Involved

Stationery for planning meetings

Time spent by the members for the formation of security committees

Money for purchase of equipment for the watchman like bows, arrows, torch, gumboots, raincoat and papyrus mat

Lessons learnt

- The community has been very responsive to the call from the school; a reduction in destruction of school property by outsiders has been noticed already
- The security around the school premises has improved since the installation of the watchman
- The support of the local councils has strengthened the performance of the SSC since they provide supervision during the day and the weekend when the school is closed
- The pupils are more responsible in caring for school property
- The PaidhaLC III chairperson Mr. Ringtho Hassan and Sub-county Chief promised support and honouring it

Challenges faced

- Inadequate funds to pay the watchman in time and to deploy another to have a 24-hrs coverage
- Bad relationship between the SSC and wrong doers (drunkards) who keep on insulting the watchman
- The school is not yet fenced, thus a lot of small paths are still used by the community members to cross through the school
- Poor attendance of school meetings by community members, thus slowing the process of coming up with resolutions and achieving a wide support

Way forward

The school wants to continue with more dialogues on 'accountability' to increase awareness among the community members and parents. The school and the Sub-county staff want to continue the communication and collaboration on WASH accountability to keep with agreed action points and continue to share best practices. SSC members would like to do exchange visits to schools doing well on sanitation and security to learn how to do better.

More info from netwasuganda@gmail.com; methodology and tools on: <http://www.irc.nl/page/52603>

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