

MAXIMIZING THE BENEFITS FROM WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION

Critical issues regarding the planning of school sanitation and hygiene education (SSHE) programmes in India

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Good co-ordination is critical for school water and sanitation programmes. For SSHE, the challenge is to ensure that education, engineering, health, non-governmental and local government institutions really work together. This applies to the state, district, and community level within India. Programmes should begin by organising a strong co-ordination mechanism at each level.

Introduction

The following paper is based on field experiences from the IRC/UNICEF SSHE programme in India which has been running since 1999. For this specific programme a number of workshops have taken place throughout the country focusing on how to plan for the SSHE programme within different states around India. The reader should be aware that this work is on-going and results in terms of impact, effectiveness will take place at a later stage. In the meanwhile, the following provides some fundamental points to consider when planning a School Sanitation and Hygiene Education Programme (SSHE). Although this paper is based on a SSHE programme in India much of the information could be applicable for other SSHE programmes in different countries.

What are some principles in relation to managing SSHE programmes?

- Focus on behaviours in the school and home. Construction is not enough. We must change from only working for construction of water and sanitation facilities toward combining this with behavioural change and good maintenance.
- Co-ordinate and use local resources. Integrate SSHE into the programmes of relevant departments dealing with SSHE. This should include sharing resources.
- Put in place a project management unit, some full-time staff, inputs from NGOs. Many SSHE programmes fail if they are “added on” to the already big workloads of department staff. They can also fail if there is only one overall manager and that person is transferred. SSHE needs a management unit and full-time staff to work intensively during the years of implementation. They organise inputs at the right time.
- The management style should be flexible.

Box 1. How can you plan a better workshop on SSHE?

Many workshops do not develop good plans. To get a useful plan that is supported by the different institutions:

- Invite participants who have experience in SSHE and success in project management.
- Provide orientation and agree on objectives and contents of SSHE at the beginning. Training inputs during the first day or two result in a much better plan.
- A field trip is very useful to schools with water and sanitation facilities.

Don't over plan. Room should be left for local planning as well.

This means having a minimum number of well known fixed rules. Community groups such as School Management Committee (SMC) or Village Education Committee (VEC), teachers and children should identify their needs, location of facilities, and final designs.

- Plan for high-coverage programmes from the beginning. This means, for example, reaching more than half the schools in a block and more than half the blocks in a district. The word “block” in this context refers to a number of households within a given area. With high coverage, a trained teacher who is transferred in the district can work on the programme in another school.
- Plan in phases. Some programmes start with “pilots” or model schools (for example, one in each block). Then, in the next phases, they plan to cover more than ½ in that area or cluster. Phasing makes the project manageable. The schools should be close enough to each other so that they can learn from the stronger schools.

How can you plan and start SSHE?

Planning workshops

To start the SSHE programme in a district, one or two planning workshops are usually held.

- In the first workshop, a general Plan of Action (PoA) is made that will launch the programme. This overall plan may be needed to get money and resources
- After there are some funds, the PoA needs to be changed into a detailed district (or block) work plan. The detailed work plan shows exactly how the programme will be carried out, who is responsible at each point and the timing of activities.

What is a Plan of Action (PoA)?

The district Plan of Action is an official document required to launch a SSHE programme in India. The Plan of Action (PoA) defines the rationale for the programme, the overall strategy, main actors and the financial allocation. It is an important document, but it is not sufficient to guide implementation.

A plan is needed that details exactly how the programme will be carried out and who is responsible at each point. Therefore the PoA needs to be transformed into an interdisciplinary district workplan, showing activities, responsibilities, inputs and dates.

What aspects in the plan should be included?

The plan might include the following headings:

- General objectives
- Groups involved
- Phases and coverage: beginning with a small number of schools, then in later phases increasing coverage within those blocks and expanding to other blocks.
- Main activities (educational materials, mobilization, training, construction, follow-up and supervision, transportation)
- Human resources: full-time staff, a district (or block) SSHE unit and NGO support
- Technology choices (that can be modified) and construction costs
- Budget: Approximate costs of the main activities and construction.

What is a micro-plan and how can you make one?

The purpose of preparing a micro-plan at an early stage is to have a basis for the preparation of the district and block plans, and an idea of how human and financial resources should be allocated. These micro-plans will form the basis for the district workplan. Thus, beginning with the survey and analysis of the actors, the preparation of a draft micro-plan leads to the formulation of a better quality and realistic district plan that is based on the real situation in the communities.

A detailed work plan is usually made after some of the funds are found. The district plan must be prepared in consultation with the groups that will be involved in the

programme. This ensures action and ownership. This can include representatives from institutions such as:

- Public Health Engineering (PHED),
- Education Department, District Primary Education, District Programme (DPEP), Institute for Education and Training (DIET), Primary education (supervisor, school teacher with good SSHE experience), curriculum,
- Rural (community) Development (at district and block levels),
- Integrated Child Development Services (district and block).
- NGOs that have successful experience in SSHE.
- CBOs that are strong locally such as the district staff from SHGs.

The group then prepares its joint workplan. The following types of information can be included in the plan:

- Activities at district, block, cluster, community levels
- Approximate time (in months) with an end date for completion of most activities
- Identification of the groups or individuals who are responsible for the success of that activity
- Inputs needed, including time by which finance should be released
- Expected outputs in numbers (number of school, teachers, trainings, orientations and so on)
- Review and approval of the work plan before it will be used to implement the programme.

Box 2. Points to consider when developing this type of workshop

* In a workshop, experience shows that several days are needed to prepare and finalise such a plan. This should include a half day field trip to schools with water and sanitation facilities and a half day or full day of orientation and training about SSHE.

- 1) Experience shows that it is possible to make detailed work plans for the short-term, for example, over 4 to 6 months. Beyond this period, the work plans will be less detailed, but should still identify the main activities and approximate time of completion.
- 2) The work plan will need to be edited by a small group after the workshop. It must be approved rapidly and distributed to all departments and groups involved. Keep it short! This will help get the work plan distributed to all the partner institutions (in 3 or 4 copies) and help people read and understand it fast.
- 3) Invite participants who have experience in SSHE and success in project management.
- 4) Provide orientation and agree on objectives and contents of SSHE at the beginning. Some training inputs during the first day or two will result in a much better plan.
- 5) A field trip is very useful to schools with water and sanitation facilities.

Don't over plan. Room should be left for local planning as well.

What are the three inputs necessary for planning?

Some information is needed before preparing the PoA or workplan. These three inputs will be useful in planning for SSHE.

1. Baseline
2. Consider gender, class and caste
3. Budgeting and micro-plans

What is the SSHE situation in my state, district or block?

Begin with a baseline study of schools that already have facilities for water and sanitation. The information can be used for planning and to advocate with district leaders for a good SSHE programme including behaviour change and maintenance, not only construction.

Box 3. Some topics for a baseline study

- Schoolyard, compound and classroom clean?

Water

- Functioning water point. Drinking quality at the water point?
- Safe water storage? Are there cups with handles to take the drinking water?

Latrines, lavatories, toilets

- Latrines within the school compound? Number of toilets and urinals enough?
- Do teachers have separate latrines?
- Are toilets and urinals clean? Functioning?
- Are latrines and urinals used by all boys and girls?
- Is water for personal cleansing inside or beside the toilets?
- Do children wash their hands correctly after using the toilet? Before eating? Is there soap?
- Do all children (9 years and older) help clean the school, including the latrines?

Teachers and parents

- Are teachers trained in school sanitation and hygiene education?
- Have teachers taught anything about hygiene? Is there a school health club?
- Are any educational materials being used in the class about SSHE?
- Can teacher correctly explain what sanitation and hygiene means?
- Are there funds to pay for repairs, soap, hygiene educational materials?
- Do parents know about the SSHE programme? Can they correctly explain?
- Have children brought home any hygiene or sanitation messages from school?

Consider the following:

- In schools similar results or problems appear again and again. Therefore a small survey will usually give enough information for planning. A sample of 10 to 50 schools in different parts of a district is usually enough.

- Follow-up visits each year are helpful to monitor the schools in the survey. The lessons learned from this can be used to improve the overall programme.

What is the gender, class and caste situation in my state, district or block?

Before finalizing the plan, it is important to think about men and women, rich and poor, different castes. Please read and answer these questions quickly. When answering, think about some SSHE schools in your district or block.

Box 4.

Who in the community usually understands the need for water points in the school, men or women?

Who in the community usually understands the need for latrines in the school, men or women or neither?

In many school programmes, children are asked to give messages about hygiene and sanitation at home. Who usually hears these messages, women or men?

Who is most likely NOT knowing about hygiene education in the classroom for their children, fathers or mothers?

Who in the family makes the decision about giving money to the school for continuing costs of water, sanitation, handwashing facilities, the fathers or mothers?

Who uses the latrine mostly, boys or girls?

If water must be carried to the school, who usually fetches it, boys or girls? Higher caste or lower caste?

Who cleans the latrines, girls or boys? Higher caste or lower caste?

Who benefits most from the programme, boys or girls? Higher caste or lower caste?

Consider the following

- Review your answers. What do they mean about the design and organization of the school programme? For example: Do fathers need separate orientation about hygiene and health?
- Gender, class and caste need to be seriously considered in planning and carrying out the school programme.

What do I need to know about budgeting and resources?

A micro-plan shows the estimated costs of the programme for each school. It can be used to develop a more detailed budget. The micro-plan for each district and each block may, in fact, be different from this example.

Consider the following

The micro-plan is not enough for budgeting. It is ALSO important to budget for:

Table 1. Estimated costs for each school

Capacity building of teachers, SMC members and school health club	Rs 3000 (year 1) + Rs. 2000 (refreshers years 2 + 3)
Education and information materials including sanitation kit and monitoring board	Rs. 3000
Toilet and urinals	Rs 10000 to Rs. 20000
Installation of Hand Pump	Rs 45,000
Hygiene promotion activities and Health check-ups	Rs 2000
Total	Rs 65,000 or Rs 75,000
Investment per child estimated at 150 children	Rs 430 or Rs 500

Example adapted from UNICEF programme in Alwar district, Rajasthan, 2002.

- materials development and distribution which is often a big problem.
- the activities and training of block and district staff
- personnel:
 - A district-level SSHE unit with full-time staff
 - full-time staff for SSHE in the blocks
 - NGO costs.
- transportation

Box 5. Some rough “rules of the thumb” for budgeting

- In the range of 15% to 25% of the total budget should be used for software (training, management, materials, NGOs, staff salaries).
- Large schools need more facilities than small schools. If the children have too few facilities, then they are often not used at all. Think of 1 toilet for 40 up to 120 children; one urinal for 40 boys and one for 40 girls.
- Boundary walls should come from other sources, not from the SSHE budget or Total Sanitation Committee funds.

Don't overplan! Allow for changes among line items.

Conclusion: On-going management activities

To keep the SSHE project on the right track, several on-going activities are needed. These are important management activities and can include:

- Once a month or once in 2 weeks, block meetings of the co-ordinators or those responsible for the programme in each block.
- Monthly cluster meetings attended by the block co-ordinator, block education officer and, if they exist, the

block DPEP/SSA facilitator and CRCF (cluster resource centre facilitator), NGOs working in the SSHE project and other line departments. The location for these rotates among the different clusters.

- Once in two or three months, meetings with the collector and Chief Executive Officer of the Zilla Parishad or its equivalent.
- Orientations to the SSHE programme every six months, or at least once a year, for district and key block staff for experience and idea sharing and to orient new staff that are transferred in.
- An annual refresher training for teachers

It is hoped that the reader will have some ideas on how to start to plan for a SSHE programme. It should be cited however that specific issues undertaken at the district co-ordination level is not included in this paper. However the full version of this piece can be requested through the authors. As stated earlier, currently this IRC/UNICEF programme is still on-going and an evaluation of the impact of the programme will be made at a later stage. In the meanwhile, the authors would appreciate feedback from the readers.

References

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