

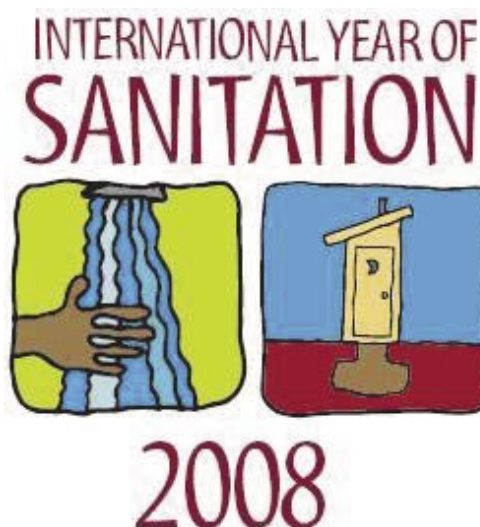
In this issue

- *Note from the editor*
- *WASH in Schools in the International Year of Sanitation 2008*
- *Giving Children a Voice: Advocacy and Awareness Raising Tools for the International Year of Sanitation*
- *School Sanitation Fund: Training youth to take advantage of the sanitation market in Tanzania*
- *'Menstruation is on her mind': Girl-centred, holistic thinking for school sanitation*
- *Update on ongoing activities*
- *New publications*



Notes & News

April 2008



Note from the editor

This issue of **Notes & News** focuses on some of the activities and initiatives undertaken in the framework of the International Year of Sanitation related to WASH in Schools. We highlight two non-traditional approaches. The School Sanitation Fund by the Dutch NGO Simavi and the Global Awareness Raising campaign by the German Toilet Organization. Further, we are pleased that Marni Summer and Jackie Kirk contributed an article on girl-centred, holistic thinking for school sanitation, one of the vital components for successful WASH in schools activities. We also have some interesting news on ecological latrines in schools, see updates on ongoing activities.

WASH in Schools in the International Year of Sanitation 2008

Since 1959 the United Nations has designated International years in order to draw attention to major issues and to encourage international action to address concerns which have global importance and ramifications. 2008 has been designated as the International Year of Sanitation. The central objective of the International Year of Sanitation is to put the global community on track to achieve the sanitation Millennium Development Goals. Sanitation is the foundation of health, dignity, and development.

The Five Key Messages of the International Year of Sanitation are that:

- **Sanitation is vital for health.** Poor hygiene and lack of access to toilets together account for 1.5

million diarrhoea-related under-five deaths each year. Children weakened by frequent diarrhoea episodes are also more vulnerable to malnutrition and opportunistic infections such as pneumonia.

- **Sanitation is a good economic investment.** Improved sanitation has positive impacts on economic growth and poverty reduction. According to a recent WHO study, every dollar spent on improving sanitation generates an average economic benefit of \$9.1. The economic cost of inaction is huge.
- **Sanitation contributes to social development.** Where adequate sanitation is coupled with improved hygiene behaviours the following improvements could be expected: less illness; improved nutrition among children; increased learning and retention among



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.





School Murals in Peru (picture: A. Mooijman)

school children; Higher work productivity among adults and importantly, more dignity and privacy for everybody especially women and girls.

- **Sanitation helps the environment.** Improved disposal of human waste protects the quality of drinking water sources. Each year more than 200 million tonnes of human waste go uncollected and untreated around the

world, fouling the environment and exposing millions of people to disease and squalor.

- **Improving sanitation is achievable!** Now is the time to act. Media and public opinion around the world can influence political leaders to act now. The estimated \$9.5 billion annual cost to halve the proportion of people without basic sanitation by 2015 is modest and affordable. If sustained, the same investment could achieve basic sanitation for the entire world within one or two decades.

UNICEF and IRC and others are undertaken various activities in the framework of the International Year of Sanitation. More information can be found on <http://www.irc.nl/home/themes/sanitation/iys2008>.

443 million school days are lost each year due to diarrhoea alone. This means that 4 in 10 children will not reach their full educational potential.

Source: Kevin Watkins, et al., Human Development Report 2006, (New York: UNDP).

Giving Children a Voice: Advocacy and Awareness Raising Tools for the International Year of Sanitation

By Mr. Thilo Panzerbieter, Member of the Board of Directors, German Toilet Organization, Berlin, Germany, For more information contact thilo.panzerbieter@germantoilet.org

Founded in 2005, the German Toilet Organization (GTO) is a non-for-profit NGO based in Berlin, Germany. Its mission is to protect the environment and improve public health by raising awareness for and providing people with clean and sustainable toilet and wastewater treatment systems. More on: www.germantoilet.org.

As mentioned in the editorial the Key Messages of IYS 2008 are:

- Sanitation is vital for human health
- Sanitation is a good economic investment
- Sanitation contributes to dignity and social development
- Sanitation helps the environment
- Improving sanitation is achievable!

With the support of UN Water, the German Toilet Organization is contributing an advocacy and public awareness campaign for the International Year of Sanitation. It includes public exhibitions and school contests, both containing modular components, which are available for use by interested organisations and partners. Adapted in communication style to different target audiences, languages and cultures it aims to reach people at all levels of society. The activities intend to spread the



School Contest promotion materials, Source: GTO

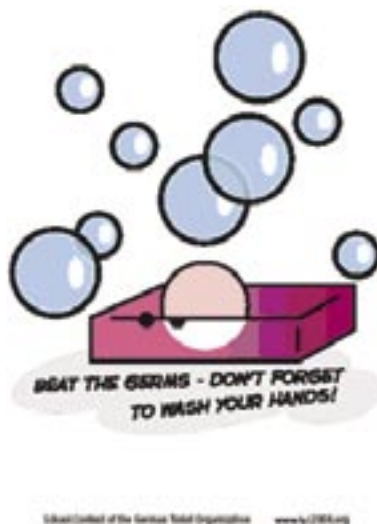
sanitation key messages as widely as possible. Children – as the future generation – are to be actively involved in this process.

Giving Children a Voice

One of the modules of the IYS 2008 Campaign is an educational contest for school children. It aims to break the “toilet taboo”, to generate hygiene awareness at schools and to increase awareness for the benefits of hygiene and sanitation in the children’s community. First and foremost, however, it provides children with a platform to voice their sanitation needs – loud enough to be heard by the politicians, donors and key decision makers.

School children in developing countries will be asked to submit posters, according to the slogan: “How would my life improve if I had a clean toilet/ latrine?” In order to participate in the poster contest, students must take knowledge of the hygiene awareness materials provided through which they can actively learn about sanitation and hygiene. Incentives are created for children to involve family and community members in the project, thereby marketing the importance of sanitation within their families.

The concept tries to build upon existing experiences. The contest framework can also be used to encourage the application of existing hygiene awareness materials. The main focus is on providing child friendly communication materials and giving guidance with and media appealing packaging to achieve maximum advocacy impact during IYS 2008.



*School Contest promotion materials,
Source: GTO*

Expected results

Winners and participants will be honoured publicly and the contest output can be used for advocacy purposes both locally, nationally and internationally. Results from the world-wide activities will be compiled in DVDs and publications for advocacy purposes beyond 2008 – because the importance of the topic does not end with the International Year of Sanitation!

Implementation

All materials created will be made available in English, French and Spanish to interested partners and organisations for local application. It can be used by governments and NGOs, for large and small scale programmes. At a local level, private or public sponsors can also get involved through implementation. GTO can even assist small local partners to seek sponsors.

If you want to use or find out more about the GTO school activities or other IYS advocacy tools, please visit www.iys2008.org. Announcements on the progress will be made in the next issue of **Notes & News** and other newsletters and UN-websites.

Also, if you have more ideas on how the contest can be adapted to your national context, please contact GTO directly: German Toilet Organization, Paulsenstraße 23, 12163 Berlin, Germany.

Lets join to make IYS 2008 a success!

School Sanitation Fund: training youth to take advantage of the sanitation market in Tanzania

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

In collaboration with Dutch companies, the NGO Simavi¹ has introduced the School Sanitation Fund to mark the International Year of Sanitation 2008. The Fund provides grants of up to EUR 15,000 for rural school sanitation projects to Simavi partners in Africa and Asia. Simavi wants their partners to develop new ideas to sustain institutional sanitation within their projects.

Of the 30 proposals received so far, the 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%² of the rural population has access to “improved sanitation”, youth will be trained to become sanitation entrepreneurs by capitalizing on the sanitation and hygiene challenges through increase of the demand for sanitation, the up-grading of its quality and the establishment of sustainable delivery mechanisms.

The vocational training package is 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. This project aims to develop a module on “Vocational Training in Sanitation”, which will form the basis to train an upcoming new breed of “sanitation entrepreneurs”, who will also spread knowledge on the use of composted excreta.

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/simavi/>*
2. *Source WHO and UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) for water supply and sanitation http://www.wssinfo.org/pdf/country/TZA_san.pdf*

‘Menstruation is on her mind’: Girl-centred, holistic thinking for school sanitation

By Ms. Marni Sommer, who recently completed her DrPH at the School of Public Health, Columbia University, New York, USA and is a Managing Editor of ‘Global Public Health.’ Ms. Jackie Kirk PhD, Education Advisor to International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Adjunct Professor at McGill University, Montreal, Canada. For more information contact: marni.sommer@gmail.com and Jackie.kirk@mail.mcgill.ca

Introduction

For many years now, the global education community, ranging from UNICEF to the World Bank, has noted the challenges of puberty for adolescent girls, and specifically the need for girl-friendly water and sanitation facilities in schools. References are made to adolescent girls dropping out of school due to lack of sufficient sanitation, to parental concerns about inadequate or unsafe facilities, and to girls’ fears – and real experiences - of sexual violence in and around unsafe toilets. Although anecdotal stories, reports in the grey literature from field projects, and articles in newsletters from local women’s groups express concern over the issue of schoolgirls and sanitation, little empirical data exists that captures girls’ actual experiences and concerns. Understanding the reality of girls’ experiences of sanitation and schooling is critical to addressing the continuing challenge to meet their specific needs in an effective and resource-feasible manner. A deeper understanding of girls’ daily struggles, and rationale behind proposed solutions, is essential to engaging policy makers who can enact legislation and make resources available at a national level.

Developing and implementing sustainable and empowering solutions for girl-centred sanitation requires holistic approaches; it is far more than an engineering challenge! It has to involve teachers, school administrators, engineers, community organizers and others educating each other and working together to provide a learning environment that is responsive to girls’ needs. This necessarily implies safe, appropriate sanitation facilities, as well as learning opportunities

Simavi together with WASTE, a Dutch NGO with expertise in ecological sanitation and Environmental Engineering & Pollution Control Organisation (EPCO), a partner organisation of WASTE in Tanzania, join hands in sharing of resources and expertise to sustain the impact of local initiatives like those of IDYDC and other partner organisations.

about puberty-related body changes. Above all, ideas for areas of improvement must come from the young people themselves.

The specific challenges of puberty for school girls

Why do school girls face specific challenges at puberty that boys do not? The answer is a mixture of the biology or physiology of puberty, the social and cultural implications of transitioning to adulthood, the institutional infrastructure and functioning based on male norms, and the economic realities of young people’s lives. Underlying them all is the frank reality of pubertal bodily changes, and in particular, girls’ unique experience of managing menstruation.

Biological and physiological changes are a natural part of growing up that affect both school girls and boys. These changes encompass secondary sex characteristics such as girls’ widening hips and boy’s growth of facial hair. Such changes are visible, while others, such as a girl’s first menstrual experience, are invisible to all but the young person themselves. Alongside the overt physical changes are the physiological surges of hormones and parallel emotional growth that pubescent girls and boys experience. The resulting unfamiliar emotions may bring feelings of shame and confusion as girls and boys attempt to navigate becoming young adults, adjusting to their new bodies and to other people’s reactions to their changing bodies and status in the community.

The social and cultural implications of the transition through puberty as it relates to sanitation are particularly

significant for girls. In societies around the world, and particularly in low-income countries where the need for improved sanitary facilities is highest, the onset of puberty brings socially related changes to girls' lives. Newly pubescent girls may be withdrawn from school for numerous reasons, such as early marriage, increased household responsibilities, or because parents fear that physically mature daughters will be at an increased risk of sexual abuse en route to (or within) school. They also fear that she could become pregnant and bring dishonour to the family. Therefore, a girl who has become a young woman acquires a biologically-connected, but socially-emphasized need for increased privacy, safety, and adequacy of sanitary facilities in which to comfortably manage her newly mature body. Inadequate and unsafe sanitary facilities provide parents, and even some girls, with one more reason to deem school as inappropriate for post-pubescent girls.

Embedded within the above social implications is the very real need for school girls to be able to manage menstruation effectively. "Managing menses" is a female-oriented experience that creates a very real and

urgent need for adequate sanitary facilities. Around the world there are numerous taboos and cultural beliefs about menstruation – ranging from the perception that menstrual blood, and therefore menstruating girls and women, is dirty; to the widespread phenomenon of secrecy surrounding the menstrual experience. Although societies do exist where a girl's first menstrual flow is celebrated in public, the latter is far more the

exception than the rule. More often heard in the field are girls' expressed fears, for example, that improper menstrual cloth disposal will lead to the extremely shameful experience of being infertile. The various actors involved in supporting girls' participation in school need to be aware of such cultural taboos and beliefs, and the related implications in terms of girls' sanitary practices.

Then there is the more biologically specific experience of menses itself. There is no singular experience of menstruation for a girl, with some girls having severe cramping, other girls having extraordinarily heavy menstrual flow; some girls beginning their menses at age 10, while others begin at age 16. The differences aside, almost all school girls, many of them still in primary school, will experience menses during the school year at varying times, and all school girls will

need to navigate the basic fundamentals of menstrual management in what are all too often girl-unfriendly school environments. These include, for example:

- The need to change their menstrual material (cloth, tissue paper, sanitary pad) at least 1-2 times during the school day in a clean and well-constructed facility
- The need for a clean water supply in order to wash their hands after changing menstrual material
- The need to overcome a profound fear that males (or other females) in the classroom will identify them as menstruating (something usually seen as shameful)
- The need to overcome the frequent and distracting worry that they will have a menstrual accident (or a 'leakage' of blood onto their uniform, a chair etc.) during the school day with no place to change
- The need to be able to wash their clothing in privacy if an accident should occur

Unfortunately, in most countries, schools are, for the most part, planned and built based on traditional models that were not designed with the needs of girls and women in mind. Girls and women are rarely consulted in school design and therefore their perspectives



School girls in Tanzania (picture by M.Sommer)

and experiences related to school sanitation and facilities – in particular their gender-specific requirements for menstrual management – are not incorporated into school and school sanitation system design and construction. For example, water may not be available within the latrine unit and no facilities for the disposal of used menstrual material provided. The situation is compounded when there are no safe and appropriate

mechanisms for girls' participation and the sharing of their concerns, and when there are few women teachers able to present girls' perspectives or experiences in decision-making processes.

The above "needs" in many ways link to an issue confronting pubertal school girls that boys do not have to face – that of the economic realities of their lives. The majority of girls in low-income countries cannot afford a monthly supply of modern, disposable sanitary pads. Aside from any discussion of the environmental, cultural or other issues connected to menstrual protection choices, post-pubescent school girls need menstrual material that will enable them to sit and move around comfortably in a classroom for several hours in a row. Modern pads are a practical solution as they are designed for maximum absorption and minimal risk of leakage, but they still need to be changed and disposed

of in safe, private places. Girls who use more traditional or more makeshift solutions with cloth or tissue paper, for example, probably need to change more frequently. Not only is the provision of clean water essential, but so is an environmentally sustainable, and culturally appropriate solution for the disposal of their pads or other materials.

Holistic, girl-centred education, water & sanitation solutions

As described above, there is a fundamental need to address girls' specific post-pubescent needs for sanitation in schools in a holistic way. Such facilities must be hygienic, environmentally friendly, resource low, safe, private, clean, and above all, tailored to the specific needs of local post-pubescent school girls. They must be socially and culturally appropriate to the community, and must build on the girls' own experiences, ideas and energies. At the same time, improved infrastructural provision for girls' bodies in schools should be complemented by the provision of opportunities for boys and girls to learn about their

bodies and to understand the changes that they may be experiencing. Access to accurate, relevant information in a safe environment in which questions can be freely raised, concerns and fears addressed is also critical. This clearly has implications for teacher education programs – especially for women teachers - and for curriculum content. There are a number of inspirational efforts to construct such girl-friendly sanitary facilities in numerous low-income countries around the world. An example from Ghana was portrayed in Notes & News of May 2007.

Other publications on the theme by the same authors are:

- "Menstruation and body awareness: linking girls' health with girls' education", paper for the Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam: <http://www.kit.nl/smartsite.shtml?id=5582>
- "Menstruation and Body Awareness: Critical Issues for Girls' Education" in the magazine EQUALS of the University of London: <http://www.ioe.ac.uk/schools/efps/GenderEducDev/Equals%20IssueNo15.pdf>

Updates on ongoing activities

Ecological latrines in Andean schools, Bolivia

UNICEF Bolivia works to provide ecological latrines mainly in Andean schools. The communities covered are the most remote and unserved highland communities, where 80% of the dwellers are indigenous. The schools are small one-classroom, multi-grade schools with around 30 children each. Two-stall and four-stall latrines with a wash basin and a protection wall are built for privacy. In 2007, 96 latrines were built at a cost of \$2500 each. Twenty percent of school latrine funding was used for capacity building among teachers, School Health Clubs and municipal community development workers, ten percent went to direct hygiene promotion activities and 10% to technical support and the rest was used to build latrines.

Constructing school latrines serves as an entry point to teach children other hygiene messages such as appropriate hand washing skills, adequate excreta disposal (at home and school) and keeping their drinking water safe. The existing water sources, usually springs are only sufficient for basic needs so hygiene is of utmost importance.

For more information contact: Susana Sandos, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Officer, UNICEF Bolivia, ssandoz@unicef.org



Healthy school initiative (HSI), Afghanistan

The overall objective of the HSI is to improve both health and education of school children, young people and school staff in 40% schools of priority provinces. HSI is a joint project between the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Public Health, and the Ministry of Rural Development and UN agencies; WFP, UNESCO and UNICEF. UNICEF is the administrative agent.

Many achievements have been made. Among others in 2007:

- A total of 500 schools have been provided with drinking water (wells fitted with hand pumps) and 10 schools through piped water supply schemes have

been provided in schools country wide in 2007 and 400 schools have been provided with latrines for boys and girls using new designs for VIP latrines and ecological sanitation. About 331,000 school children have directly benefited from water and sanitation facilities.

- HSI training package for teachers on child friendly methodologies have been developed and distributed to all HSI schools covering health, hygiene, child friendly schools and mine risk education topics.
- A nation wide de-worming campaign has been carried out for a total of about 5.6 million grade 1-9 school aged children. In addition, first aid kits have been delivered to all HSI schools.
- Eight schools have been selected in 4 provinces to make their own plan for a school garden project. Vegetables seeds and seedlings and agricultural tools have been distributed to the schools accordingly. Training was provided by FAO and government staff on agriculture and nutrition to students, teachers, school gardeners, greenery committee members and guards.

For more information contact Nadarajah Moorthy,
UNICEF Afghanistan: nmoorthy@unicef.org

Girls Education Project (GEP) in Borno, Nigeria

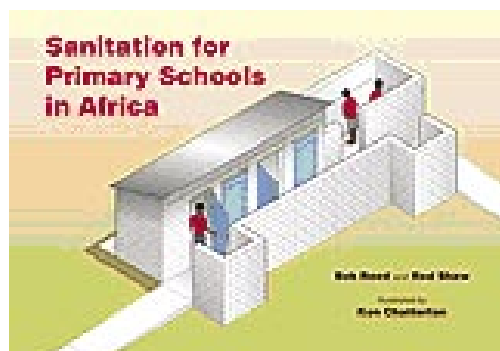
The aim is to create a child-friendly school learning environment for increased enrolment, retention and completion of primary education. Clean and convenient school toilets are known to reduce absenteeism of adolescent girls, so toilets were designed taking into account the needs and interests of girls.

In this Gubio Islamiya GEP school, UNICEF project officers and the head teachers showed the new toilets constructed with handwashing facilities, materials and cleaning agents. Also stated by one of the female head teachers: "these are good for the girls and we are happy. We will want our men to also build such good toilets in our homes too".

This year GEP school toilet designs are being replicated in Nigeria. In a nationwide project, gender sensitive public toilets are being constructed in schools, health facilities, car-parks, markets and other public places.

For more information contact: Sam Andenyang,
UNICEF Borno State Water and Sanitation Consultant,
samandenyang2000@yahoo.ca

New Publications



Sanitation for primary schools in Africa

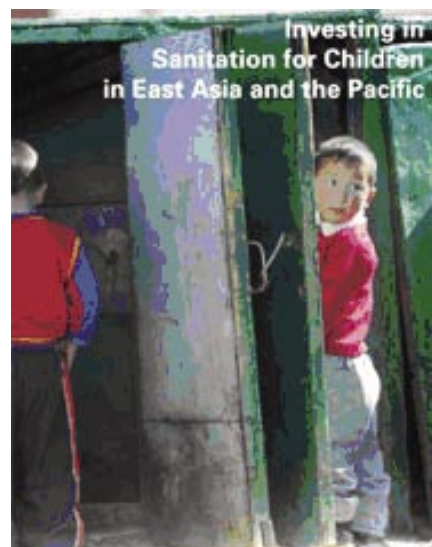
Produced by WEDC and written by Bob Reed and Rod Shaw as a contribution to the International Year of Sanitation 2008, this book provides easy-to-use tools for assessing sanitation, water supply and handwashing facilities in primary schools in Africa so that appropriate decisions can be made about sanitation improvements. A number of low-cost latrine designs suitable for many rural and peri-urban locations in Africa are included.

This book is available in print or can be downloaded through the WEDC-website at: <http://wedc.lboro.ac.uk/publications/>

Investing in sanitation for children in East Asia and the Pacific

A publication of UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, February 2008. Includes the Declaration of the First East Asia Ministerial Conference on Sanitation and Hygiene of 1 December 2007.

Available at: <http://www.unicef.org/eaproc/1Feb08.pdf>



WASH for Children: Investing in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in East Asia and the Pacific

A publication of UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, January 2008. Includes a chapter on ensuring WASH in schools.

Available at: http://www.unicef.org/eapro/WholeBook_1Feb08.pdf



The most famous toilets of Uganda

An article on the use of ecological sanitation in a boarding school in Uganda can be found at pages 4-7 of Sanitation NOW 2008. This is a magazine on the global sanitation crisis, published by the Stockholm Environment Institute and the EcoSanRes Programme.

Online available at: http://www.ecosanres.org/pdf_files/SanitationNOW2008.pdf

Symposium

Ensuring sustainable sanitation services to the urban poor poses many challenges for which answers have not yet been found. The IRC symposium '**Sanitation for the Urban Poor: Governance and Partnerships**' (19 – 21 November 2008, Delft, the Netherlands) seeks to bring together a wide range of experts and practitioners to provide a platform to share good practices and explore new ways forward. Abstracts for the symposium papers on the following five topics – urban governance and sanitation, innovative finance for sanitation, partnerships for sanitation, dynamics of urban settlements, and technological options – can be sent to symposium@irc.nl before May 31, 2008. For more information please look at <http://www.irc.nl/page/38373>

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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