



Sustaining and Scaling School Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Plus Community Impact



Impact and Cost Effectiveness

Why Invest in School Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Interventions?

Impacts

In 2006, the Government of Kenya, CARE, Emory University and Water.org entered a five-year partnership to evaluate the impacts of improved school WASH and try to understand what makes for successful school WASH programs. The partnership used a randomized, controlled trial in 185 primary schools in western Kenya.

The partnership identified the following positive impacts:

- An average reduction of six days per year in girls' absenteeism as a result of improved hygiene and water treatment (controlling for grade and age).
- A 45 percent reduction in the odds of the prevalence of heavy infection of Ascaris, a common worm infection—from improved hygiene and sanitation



The reduction in girls' absenteeism is striking and

suggests that school WASH is a potential pathway for addressing gender inequity.

Cost Effectiveness of School WASH

School WASH interventions can be extremely cost-effective, given the dramatic improvements they produce. For schools that already have water available within 1km, inexpensive programs focused on behavior change can produce big results at a low cost. A simple hygiene plus water treatment intervention costs only about KES 231 per pupil for the first year and KES 37 per pupil for subsequent years.

Challenges to Sustainability

The longevity of school WASH investments is a concern. To address sustainability, serious efforts need to be made to improve accountability of school administrations; increase budgets available to schools for recurrent costs like soap or water treatment and change cultural attitudes on hand washing, latrine maintenance and water treatment.

SWASH+ is a five-year applied research project to identify, develop, and test innovative approaches to school-based water, sanitation and hygiene in Nyanza Province, Kenya. The partners that form the SWASH+ consortium are CARE, Emory University, the Great Lakes University of Kisumu, the Government of Kenya, and formerly the Kenya Water for Health Organisation (KWAHO), and Water.org. SWASH+ is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Global Water Challenge. For more information, visit www.swashplus.org.

