

RAISING CLEAN HANDS

Call to Action for WASH in Schools Communications Strategy 2010





Contents

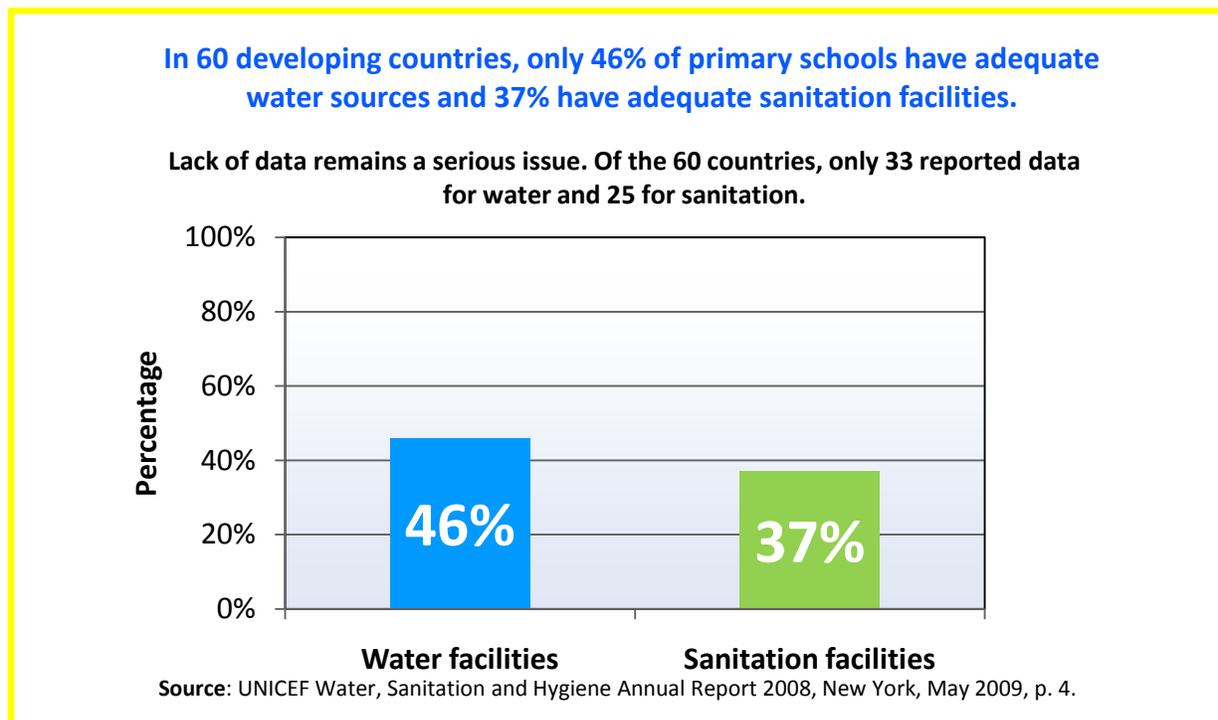
1	Background	2
2	Awareness, Action, Acceleration: Central objective of the Call to Action . . .	3
3	Strategic Considerations	4
4	Target Audiences for the Call to Action for WASH in Schools.	6
	4.1 Principal target audiences.	6
	4.2 Secondary target audiences.	6
	4.3 Other audiences.	7
5	Key Messages	8
Annex	Call to Action for WASH in Schools Communications Activities. .	10
	1. Call to Action for WASH in Schools Flagship Publication	10
	2. Website	10
	3. Media Relations	10
	4. Lobbying: Celebrities and high-level individuals.	11
	5. Other Activities.	11
	Endnotes	12

1 Background

Water, sanitation and hygiene education in schools – a strategic approach known as WASH in Schools – provides safe drinking water, improved sanitation facilities and hygiene education encouraging the development of healthy behaviours for life. WASH in Schools helps fulfil children’s right to health and education and enjoys widespread recognition for its significant role in achieving the Millennium Development Goals – particularly those related to universal access to primary education, reducing child mortality, improving environmental sustainability and promoting gender equality.

Despite this knowledge, among a large group of developing countries less than half of primary schools have access to safe water and just over a third have adequate sanitation, and even where facilities exist, they are often in poor condition. Lack of coverage data for WASH in Schools is one barrier to securing the rights of children. Of the 60 developing countries surveyed, only 33 provided data on access to water in primary schools and 25 had data on sanitation.¹

The Call to Action for WASH in Schools supports global efforts to make the vision shared by WASH in Schools partners a reality: ***a world where all children go to school and all schools provide a safe, healthy and comfortable environment where children grow, learn and thrive.***



2 Awareness, Action, Acceleration: Central objective of the Call to Action

Prioritizing investments in water, sanitation and hygiene education (WASH) within the health, education and water sectors, while improving access to quality education and preventive health measures, is the central objective of the Call to Action for WASH in Schools.

Communication is vital to achieving this objective. The overarching goal for the Call to Action communications strategy is to reach target audiences around the world and raise awareness about the key issues associated with WASH in Schools – education, health, the environment and climate change, social and economic development, and gender equality.

For the primary target audience of politicians and government officials, particularly aid administrators, this strategy is designed to increase substantive awareness, ideally leading to decisive action in support of improved WASH in Schools. For the general public, the secondary target audience, the strategy seeks to communicate the importance and benefits of WASH in Schools interventions. This strategy also considers the media as an essential audience, because the dissemination of information and the formation of public opinion often result from widespread media involvement.



3 Strategic Considerations

The Call to Action for WASH in Schools presents a unique opportunity to move water supply, sanitation and hygiene education in schools higher on the global political agenda. The increased recognition of the importance of sanitation and hygiene – spurred by such drives as the International Year of Sanitation (2008) and Global Handwashing Day, to be celebrated for the third year on 15 October 2010 – prepared a positive environment that generated an unparalleled level of momentum and visibility that should be utilized to promote WASH in Schools. Every agency associated with water, sanitation, hygiene and quality education, as well as agencies dedicated to preventive health measures, are encouraged to make every possible effort to maximize the impact of the Call to Action. A professionally planned and coordinated communications strategy is an essential feature of this work.

- On 3–6 April 2010, the Call to Action for WASH in Schools will officially be launched at the Dubai International Humanitarian Aid and Development Conference (DIHAD). A complementary media event designed to attract maximum political and public attention is planned. To best attract national and local media, the WASH in Schools communications strategy will also support launch events at the regional and country levels.
- One year is a relatively brief time in which to effect lasting change. Accordingly, the majority of the Call to Action for WASH in Schools communications materials and activities will either send specific messages to the principal target audience of political decision-makers or create broad awareness of WASH in Schools as an important global issue among the general public. Broad awareness of and support for WASH in Schools and its related issues are a prerequisite for real social awareness and activism.
- As an issue, WASH in Schools is a political ‘orphan.’ Many governments have several ministers, with each only partially responsible for the issue. Although most often the ministry of education has primary responsibility, substantial contributions are required from ministries of water, health, finance and others. Accordingly, messages must be broad and must encompass the various aspects of WASH in Schools: health, economic and social development, the environment and gender equality.
- The Call to Action for WASH in Schools will be characterized by a positive and solution-oriented tone. To promote a realization of our vision – a world where all children go to school and all schools provide a safe, healthy and child-friendly environment where students grow, learn and thrive – the initiative will include specific calls to action aimed to reach specific audiences.

- Investing in improved WASH in Schools conditions creates immediate, tangible benefits – not only inside the school environment but also in communities by improving sanitation and hygiene practices. The outcomes of WASH in Schools not only benefit health and education but also address environmental sustainability, climate change, and the social and economic sectors. The myriad benefits of improved WASH in Schools will be at the heart of Call to Action for WASH in Schools communications.
- A number of upcoming special events are ideal opportunities for Call to Action communications initiatives. **2010 events include:**



3-6 April – Official launch of *Call to Action for WASH in Schools*, Dubai International Humanitarian Aid Development Conference (DIHAD)

17-21 May – United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI) 10th Anniversary, Global Conference, Dakar

June-July – 1Goal: Education for All, FIFA World Cup Campaign

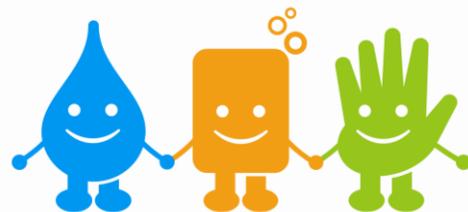


12 August – United Nations International Youth Day



5-11 September – World Water Week, Stockholm, Annual Meeting organized by the Stockholm International Water Institute

15 October – Global Handwashing Day



19 November – World Toilet Day

20 November – Universal Children’s Day, United Nations

4 Target Audiences for the Call to Action for WASH in Schools

4.1 Principal target audiences

Politicians – Political decision-makers will be a key part of making the Call to Action for WASH in Schools a success and in accelerating progress towards a world where all children go to school and all schools provide a safe, healthy and comfortable environment where children grow, learn and thrive. They will be urged, directly and through their constituencies, to take action. Politicians to be reached include heads of state and ministers of education as well as the ministers whose responsibilities include infrastructure, health, finance, social affairs, the environment and foreign affairs, inter alia. In the developed world, politicians will be encouraged to support national WASH in Schools activities and to increase funding for WASH in Schools initiatives. In the developing countries, political leaders will be urged to forge cooperative relationships between the various ministries (under the leadership of the ministry of education) to commit resources to improve water supply and sanitation infrastructure, hygiene practices and educational capabilities in schools.

Aid administrators and other officials – The Call to Action for WASH in Schools will reach out to aid administrators and other senior officials who create policies and establish funding-allocation requests for government approval.

4.2 Secondary target audiences

News media and specialized journalists – WASH in Schools is not a topic covered regularly by many members of mainstream news media, unless in specific school-related broadcasts. News media at the local, national and international levels make up an important target audience, because they are the primary conduit of communications with other target groups and population segments. International and national media will be regularly offered substantive, issue-oriented WASH in Schools news releases throughout 2010.

Specialized journalists and media outlets covering directly related topics, such as education, aid and development, infrastructure, health, the environment and science, will receive story ideas and event invitations. Specialized media include education and engineering journals, among others.

General public – The communications strategy aims to make WASH in Schools relevant to people in both industrialized and developing countries. Engaging the general public is essential to ensuring the message reaches specific target audiences.

The Call to Action for WASH in Schools communications strategy can be seen as a circle: if the public is interested in improving the health of their children and education outcomes in schools, then politicians, bureaucrats, media, academics and other opinion-influencers will be more engaged. Messages to the general public will be designed to provide information about relevant water sanitation and hygiene issues, and will refer to specific ways the public can work to promote improved water, sanitation and hygiene:



Angolan Ministry of Education, Mr. Burity da Silva, giving a speech at the Global Handwashing Day central event in Benguela on 15 October 2009.

- *In the industrialized world*, communications will remind the public that WASH in Schools is often neglected in their own countries. The low level of students' hygiene practices, e.g., hand washing with soap, is a phenomenon that needs immediate attention, as in the case of H1N1 ('swine flu') or other pandemic preventive measures. Materials and activities will seek to educate people about the elements that directly impact their daily lives, and to inform them about the 'WASH in Schools crisis' in their regions. The Call to Action will encourage the general public to lobby local and national politicians to make WASH in Schools a higher political priority.
- *In the developing world*, communications will inform people about the benefits of WASH in Schools programming, as relevant to their particular circumstances. The Call to Action messages will also encourage the public to work to improve water and sanitation facilities in their schools and in their households, as well as improving their hygiene practices. Additionally, communications activities and materials will encourage the lobbying of local and national governments to make WASH in Schools improvements a priority.

4.3 Other audiences

Corporate decision-makers will be engaged on several levels. Specific international corporations (manufacturers of hygiene and sanitation-related products, television networks, other media platforms) will be approached to be directly involved in Call to Action initiatives and communications. Other companies will be urged to increase participation in water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion projects in schools.

Business leaders will be called upon to act as WASH in Schools ambassadors or 'champions' to carry the messages into specific forums and to lobby political leaders on behalf of the Call to Action objectives. At the regional and local levels, the Call to Action for WASH in Schools coalition will help local and regional corporations involved in water, sanitation and hygiene education projects to garner public credit for their work.

Academics who research topics relevant to WASH in Schools will be encouraged to publish research findings in popular media as opinion pieces supporting the Call to Action for WASH in Schools.



© UNICEF/NYHQ2009-1892/Estey

Religious leaders greatly influence public opinion in many communities. More than 64 per cent of all schools worldwide have been founded by or are operated by faith-based organizations, or encompass a role for faith within their education systems. Religious leaders will be encouraged to inform their congregations about water supply, sanitation and hygiene issues in schools with appropriately tailored messages.

Celebrities from music, sports, film and television will be invited to help carry the Call to Action for WASH in Schools messages. Popular stars need to be attracted to the WASH in Schools sector as a worthy issue for their time and attention.

5 Key Messages

There are five key messages to be directed towards target audiences through various communication products, which will be adapted accordingly.

Children's health improves with WASH in Schools

Schools with quality WASH programmes can effectively reduce the transmission of diseases. More than 40 per cent of diarrhoea cases in schoolchildren result from transmission in schools rather than homes.² Studies in schools in India, Kenya and Tanzania reveal that less than 2 per cent of children wash their hands with soap, and less than 5 per cent of educational facilities had soap available at the time of the visit.³

Worm infestations among schoolchildren are a major barrier to reaching their potential in education and beyond. Worms affect an estimated 400 million school-aged children in the developing world.⁴ Chronic hookworm infestations are associated with reduced physical growth and impaired intellectual development,⁵ and children enduring intense infestations with whipworm miss twice as many school days as their infestation-free peers.⁶

WASH in Schools increases attendance and cognitive development

Education and health are inseparable. Nutrition deficiencies, diarrhoea and worm infestations are all related to poor WASH – and all affect school participation and learning. WASH in Schools is a first step towards ensuring a healthy physical learning environment. Schools with quality WASH programmes can effectively increase attendance and learning outcomes.

Improving WASH in Schools is achievable

We have the skills and the experience and know what needs to be done to equip every school with quality WASH in Schools programmes. The technologies, approaches and skilled people are ready. Every school can be equipped with quality WASH programmes.

Students, teachers, communities, local and national governments, civil society and private companies all need to work together. Media and public opinion around the world can influence political leaders to act now. Together we can make our vision a reality – ***a world where all children go to school and all schools provide a safe, healthy and comfortable environment where children grow, learn and thrive.***

Students are agents of change in their communities

Some 2.65 billion people live without access to proper toilet facilities, and 883 million don't have access to safe water.⁷ Climate change negatively impacts access to safe water and sanitary environments. This is a global crisis, and WASH in Schools can help mitigate the risks and overcome the challenges. Children are generally more receptive to new ideas than adults, and can more easily change their behaviour and promote improved practices within their families and among their communities.

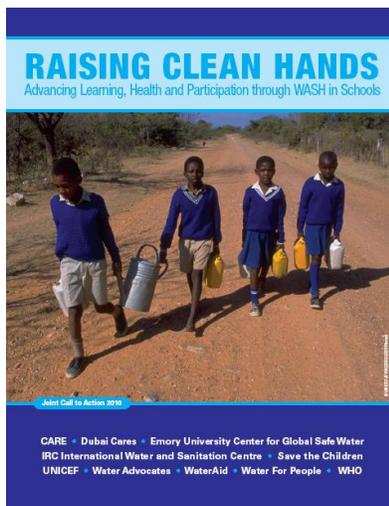
WASH in Schools promotes gender equality

WASH in Schools fosters social inclusion and individual self-respect by offering an alternative to stigma and marginalization. Girls in developing countries, for example, often report that issues related to managing menstrual hygiene cause them to be absent from school, frequently a first step towards dropping out altogether. An evaluation in Kenya indicates that girls' attendance increased in schools where there was more hand washing and very high toilet use.⁸ Quality WASH in Schools programmes empower girls and female teachers.

WASH in Schools facilities, which have traditionally been designed for the 'average' child, now considers the fact that children have a wide range of abilities and needs. The additional cost of accessible facilities can be minimal if they are planned to be child-friendly from the outset. WASH in Schools raises awareness about inclusive education and seeks to enhance accessibility of sanitation facilities and hygiene services – bringing the large numbers of children with disabilities, who are often excluded, into the school community.

Annex Call to Action for WASH in Schools Communications Activities

The following list of communications activities is just the beginning. New initiatives can be added, while others might be modified as the Call to Action for WASH in Schools progresses.



1 Call to Action for WASH in Schools Flagship Publication

Raising Clean Hands: Advancing, health, learning and participation through WASH in Schools is a concise booklet describing the Call to Action for WASH in Schools objectives, key messages and relevant issues, including links with further detailed information and six specific points of action. It will be available for use by the WASH in Schools coalition at meetings with political leaders, officials, business leaders and others. The publication will be available in English, French and Spanish.

2 Website

www.washinschools.com is the principal information portal for WASH in Schools. It lists Call to Action activities worldwide, and provides information for the media and other interested parties

through topical information pages and an extensive library.

3 Media Relations

3.1 Press kit

A media information kit on issues related to WASH in Schools will be regularly updated and distributed to selected media outlets around the globe and at relevant member organizations' events.

3.2 List of spokespersons

A list with several spokespersons will be made available on the website for anyone who requests the opinion of an expert in WASH in Schools related issues.

3.3 Issue-oriented news releases

Substantive, issue-oriented news releases will be developed over the year and pitched to media outlets worldwide. This includes the development of local interest news releases.

3.4 TV public service announcement and 'B-rolls'

A public service announcement for television will be produced and offered to international and national media outlets. The collection of B-roll material (video without narration, which can be used to enhance a story) will be an ongoing endeavour. B-roll will be shot at photogenic special events such as hand-washing days, in various locations around the globe, and made available to media outlets.

3.5. International media sponsorship

At least one international print and one international TV outlet will be approached to act as a media sponsor for the Call to Action for WASH in Schools. The sponsorship will involve a commitment to produce at least one special feature on WASH in Schools per quarter after the official launch of the Call to Action and a commitment to provide prominent coverage of major events during the year.

3.6. Advocacy and communications outreach kit: support to regional, national and local conferences and initiatives

An advocacy and communications outreach kit, including background, key messages, a fact sheet, frequently asked questions, media relations advice, talking points, sample PowerPoint presentations and a WASH in Schools logo will be developed and made available online for use at regional, national and local Call to Action initiatives and events.

4 Lobbying: Celebrities and high-level individuals

Political leaders, corporate leaders, celebrities and academics will be engaged in the Call to Action for WASH in Schools. Women, youth and student leaders for WASH programmes will target high-level popular culture celebrities to advocate for the Call to Action objectives.

5 Other activities

5.1 Logo contest

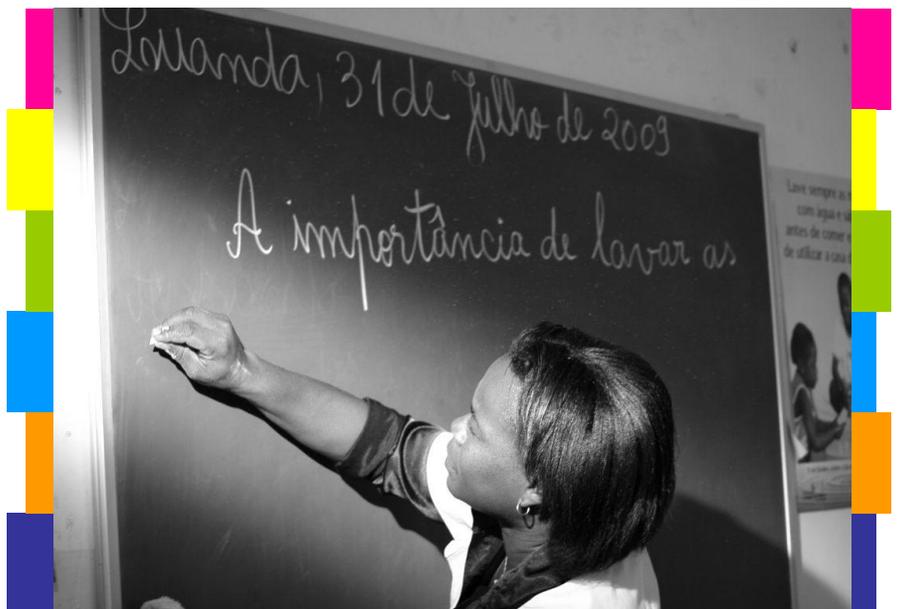
A special contest will be announced on developing a WASH in Schools logo. Winning logos will be published by media partners, posted on the WASH in Schools website, and later displayed at the United Nations, around the world, and in viral marketing campaigns.

5.2 Corporate sponsorship

At least one international hotel chain or an international brand of hygiene-materials supplier will be approached to become a corporate sponsor of the Call to Action for WASH in Schools. In 2010, this corporate sponsor is expected to use the WASH in Schools logo and key messages in its properties worldwide.

5.3 WASH in Schools support material such as T-shirts, pins and stickers

Support materials will be produced and made available for organizations and events related to WASH in Schools.



Endnotes

1 This analysis is based on UNICEF 2008 data and reflects the most recent statistics available. Although such key information for WASH in Schools is improving, availability of reliable data is still an issue to be resolved.

2 James S. Koopman, 'Diarrhea and School Toilet Hygiene in Cali, Colombia', *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 1978.

3 Vincent Njunguna, et al., 'The Sustainability and Impact of School Sanitation, Water and Hygiene Education in Kenya', UNICEF and IRC, 2008.

4 Andrew, Hall, et al., 'A Review and Meta-Analysis of the Impact of Intestinal Worms on Child Growth and Nutrition', *Maternal & Child Nutrition*, 2008.

5 Marco Albonico, et al., 'Controlling Soil-Transmitted Helminthiasis in Pre-School-Age Children through Preventive Chemotherapy', *Neglected Tropical Diseases*, 2008.

6 World Health Organization, *Report of the Third Global Meeting of the Partners for Parasite Control: Deworming for health and development*, 2005.

7 WHO-UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation, *Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation: Special focus on sanitation*, 2008.

8 Vincent Njunguna, et al., 'The Sustainability and Impact of School Sanitation, Water and Hygiene Education in Kenya', UNICEF and IRC, 2008.

Join us in Raising Clean Hands for WASH in Schools

To join us in raising clean hands for WASH in Schools, please contact Murat Sahin, UNICEF adviser for WASH in Schools, at msahin@unicef.org.



