



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



Governance Trial SWASH+ Phase II

Background

The first phase (2006-2011) of SWASH+ (Sustaining and Scaling School Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, plus Community Impact) was an action-research and advocacy project focused on measuring the impact of WASH interventions in primary schools in western Kenya, and seeking increased investment on the basis of the results. The second phase (2012-2016) of SWASH+ was designed to improve the sustainability and effectiveness of school WASH at scale in order to support the government of Kenya's comprehensive school health policy.

Three barriers to sustainability and effectiveness were identified at the start of the second phase: decision-makers' lack of (1) access to high-quality data on the status of school WASH; (2) information on school WASH life-cycle costs; and (3) knowledge of how to improve school WASH governance and accountability. Multiple studies were initiated to address these barriers and to improve learnings for the government of Kenya. One study, explained here, is the Governance trial.

The Interventions

Based on the belief that knowing the benefits of WASH will increase its prioritization and practice, this trial provided information to parents and teachers, and encouraged schoolchildren to participate as well. Recognizing the limited resources available in target communities, the interventions included only low-cost, incentives that were more likely to be sustainable. To achieve this, the existing resources were considered as

fixed and were not supplemented.

The Governance trial was implemented in three counties — Kilifi, Kisumu and Nyeri — where study team enumerators visited all the project schools and monitored 18 WASH attributes.

Numerous combinations of interventions were tested in the project, including:

- 1) Scoring of schools based on SMS responses by parents on the quality of sanitation at their child's school, (based on discussions with the child), with this information collated and sent to all parents and teachers in the arm.
- 2) Scoring of schools based on study team enumerator-generated information on sanitation quality at schools, with this information sent to all parents and teachers in the arm.
- 3) Scoring of schools based on study team enumerator-generated information on sanitation quality at schools, with this information sent to all parents and teachers—for that specific school only.
- 4) Sending SMS reminders to school management and head teachers regarding the importance of school WASH (messages had different content over the course of the trial)
- 5) Giving calendars to parents and teachers providing information to and requesting action from them; each month including a "pledge note" that can be removed and taken to school by the child.

High performers — according to ratings from parents or study enumerators, or based on the number of "pledges" — were awarded certificates of achievement, establishing both a direct incentive in the certificate

itself, and an indirect one created through competition between school communities.

The Results

Overall, only very modest improvements were found by project's end, with parental SMS (intervention number 4, with or without intervention number 5, calendars) more impactful than performance incentives 1-3, of which the parent-generated data was most successful. Calendars alone had no impact, though trends differed between districts for all intervention components. Only one district, Kisumu, saw double-digit improvements in WASH measures, which included:

- Cleanliness of sanitation facilities
- Reliability of superstructure
- Existence of handwashing facilities with soap/ash and toilet paper/water in latrines.

Cleanliness was the aspect most often improved, which comes as no surprise since it is much cheaper than hardware improvements or additions. There was no significant difference in sanitation facilities between schools that were compared to others and schools that were only given their own score (based on enumerator-generated data), suggesting that the indirect incentive (competition) was insignificant.

There was no evidence that the project increased prioritization of WASH in the schools, and no significant changes were observed in school attendance.

Next Steps and Lessons Learned

Despite limited significant changes, there were some knowledge gains made over the course of the project:

- Schools, on average, responded positively to the interventions, at a small scale.
- The most successful lower-level indicators (i.e., improved WASH knowledge) don't necessarily line up with the places that had the greatest impact (i.e., improved sanitation). This may be because

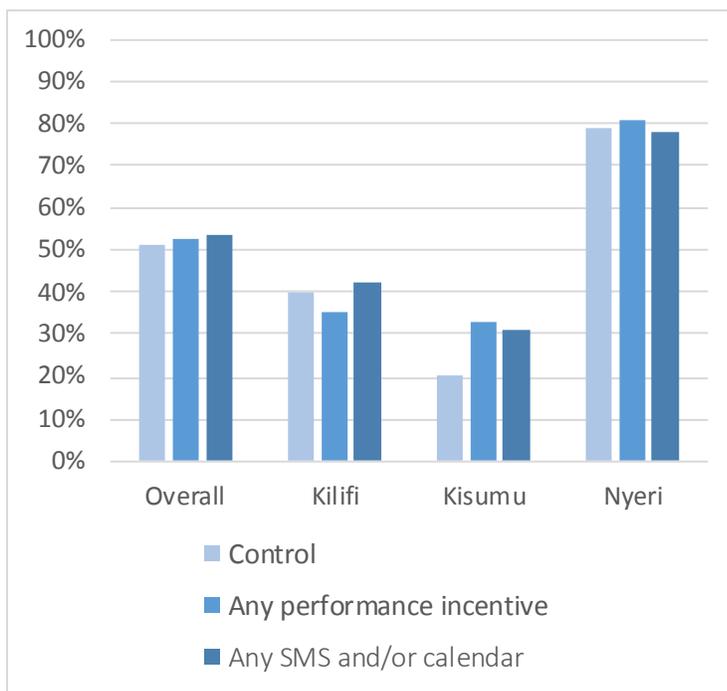


Figure 1. Performance of different intervention components. Score is percentage of schools that achieved 4/5 stars for sanitation facilities

each SMS provided a reminder to action instead of new information. The theory of change should be revisited to consider incorporating this possibility.

- This project specifically focused on small interventions that would not require supplemental resources for implementation; some small increases could have significant impact, such as teaching soap-making for schools or increasing information distribution through radio broadcasts.
- As evidenced by the different responses across counties, interventions should always attempt to be context-specific.
- Parent-generated data was reasonably accurate, which both engaged these stakeholders and shows the potential for a low-cost monitoring method.

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