



A guide to designing a WASH (Water, Sanitation & Hygiene) in Schools Project (WinS)

This article is meant as a guideline only. It is in no way exhaustive and further focused research is necessary. WASH projects are very rewarding and can have a considerable effect provided they are properly planned.

One of the characteristics of a WASH project is the fact that Water, Sanitation & Hygiene are all interconnected with each other and with education. It is thus essential to treat all these aspects simultaneously to have any chance at a sustainable project that is going to change lives.

For Rotary clubs, a Global Grant is the ideal lever to invest in such a project. WASH Rotary Action Group (WASH-RAG) is happy to provide some tips in this regard.

Avoid tourist humanitarianism: A visit to an exotic foreign destination can provoke strong feelings to lend a hand when confronted with abject poverty. Consider first that suffering exists all over the world and that it is important to put the funds available to the most effective use. Consider also that the funds put at your disposal, be they your own or from other clubs, districts, etc are entrusted to you in the confidence that you will ensure that they are put to the best possible use

Here, there are several important criteria to consider:

1) Is the area in which you wish to work stable and free of conflict?

For example: there is little point in realizing a WASH project in a zone where it is possible that the water well you have constructed has the chance of being usurped by armed bandits

2) Is the area easily accessible for regular supervision by a partner Rotary Club?

Establish a motivated and reliable local partner: Not all Rotary clubs are equally dedicated or motivated. Research the best possible partner club and specific rotarians to lead the project. The DRFC (District Foundation Chair) of your district can be of invaluable help in putting you in touch with the DRFC of your target country to get recommendations of clubs and specific rotarians to collaborate with.

Do not attempt a project without first establishing reliable contacts.

If you do not succeed, it is advisable to look for a new location and start again

Needs assessment report: Assessing the needs of the community you plan to help is an essential first step in designing an effective and sustainable global grant project.



Form a working committee with community leaders, the project lead team of your rotary partner club, representatives of the local authorities, eventual project collaborators and other prominent stakeholders to determine the needs of the community and strategize.

It is unwise to proceed with a project without the full involvement of the local community

Beware: never make promises or allusions that you are not sure you can fulfill .

Always show the community your utmost respect. Whilst they may be grateful, they do not want to be robbed of their dignity

Before you start, you will need a **Geo-hydrological study** of the area. Most often, these studies have already been done by UNICEF, the local government or other organizations and you can simply get a copy. If not, you will need to get a study done by a competent geohydrologist. This report is essential to your sanitation project in determining the soil structure and the rate at which black water will permeate into the soil. It will also provide useful information on the water table in periods of high & low rainfall and guide you in avoiding ground water pollution.

It will also provide useful information on sub soil aquifers in the area and the probability of finding water at the drilling site if a well is to be provided. Aside from this, it will help in determining the depth to which you will need to drill and the type of bore hole required

The components of a good WASH project:

Consider the consequences of your actions. Your project can have a serious impact on the local community. For example: constructing a well in a community with a chronic shortage of water will most probably result in attracting people from the surroundings. A village of just 1500 inhabitants could swell to 5000 in just a few years, resulting in conflicts and social unrest. Giving away something for free is never a good idea. A nominal charge invokes social responsibility and a minor source of income to help in the sustainability of your project

1) **Source of revenue:** In order to make the project sustainable, a source of revenue will be necessary for the community to finance and maintain the project in the long term.

Many options are available: agriculture (provides food, employment and income), Pisciculture, Animal husbandry, Apiculture, Clothes making, brick manufacture, etc, etc

Think that you will need to form a local co-operative and register it with the local authorities to oversee the administration of revenues and expenditures.

2) **Start with sanitation:** open defecation is a worldwide problem (SDG 6.2). It leads to pollution of water , sickness and disease. Diarrhea caused by drinking polluted water prevents children from attending school. Menstruation keeps the girls way from school.

3) If you are planning a WinS (WASH in schools) project, WASH and MHM (Menstrual Hygiene Management) education is a must. Start by training the teachers (training the trainers).

Standard training manuals are available from UNICEF. If you have trouble finding these, contact your local WASH-RAG (Water, Sanitation & Hygiene Rotary Action Group) ambassador in your district. If your district does not as yet have an ambassador, contact WASH-RAG directly <https://wash-rag.org/>



If you are constructing a toilet block, think of sustainability. Do not construct septic pits in an area with no drainage system or possibility of emptying the pits once they are full.

Pour flush toilets using twin pits can be a good solution. One pit is put in use and after 2-3 years switched to the second pit. The first pit is left idle for the next 2-3 years during which time the fecal sludge dries and the pathogens degenerate. At the end of the period, the waste has no odour and can easily be dug out and used as fertilizer. You have thus effectively turned the toilets into a fertilizer factory that can be run for many years to come with little maintenance.

Remember: Toilets Boys/Girls must be segregated. The number of toilets per gender are determined by the student composition of the school. Always allow for capacity expansion and consider that the number of students will grow with time.

Construction guidelines are available on the UNICEF web-site or with your WASH-RAG contact.

A bio-digester toilet system is another alternative. It does not produce fertilizer but it does produce bio gas. Being an anaerobic process, it needs a supply of bacteria and regular maintenance.

MHM : Think about providing re-useable sanitary napkins for the girls. These come in packs of 6 per girl and a full kit would include two sets of undergarments, a towel and a block of soap.

Think also of including wash rooms for the girls in your sanitary block, where they can cleanse themselves in private.

These measures will encourage girls to attend school during their menstruation whereas otherwise they would have stayed away

Hand WASH: the importance of regular hand washing is critical to good health and its importance will be included in the school's WASH curriculum. Do not forget to include hand washing points inside your sanitary block. These could be fed by a cistern that collects rain water from the roof of your sanitary block.

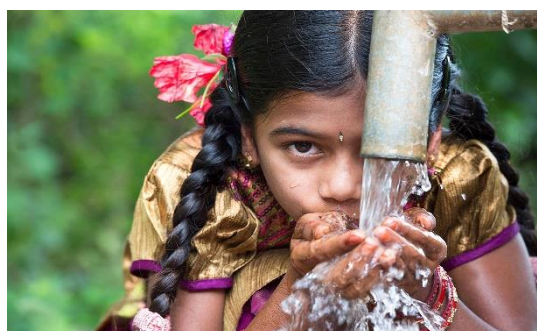


Make sure that your WASH/MHM training program is completed and that the student educational program is underway before commissioning the toilet block. The community also needs to be informed of your WASH/MHM program and the important impact it will have on the community

Maintenance of the toilets is essential. Adequate instruction in the regular cleaning and maintenance of the toilets is very important. Think also of an on-going supply of soap, cleaning products, brushes, etc. This needs to be financed by the income generated by the supporting projects

Water well: Finally, when you have ensured a clean environment, the water well can be constructed.

Many projects just sub-contract this to local contractors, often with little or no supervision. If a well is not properly constructed it can constrict and run dry in a very short time. Well construction plans are available from UNICEF or from your local WASH-RAG contact.



Constructing a well close to a school is always a good idea. The children are thus obliged to attend school and return home with water

Water pump: Choose your pump carefully. UNICEF recommends certain pumps which are durable and can be maintained at low cost. The pumps are suitable for wells of different depths and for a variety of applications. Remember to factor in the cost of spare parts and maintenance. Contact your WASH-RAG ambassador if in doubt.

Follow up: After completion of the project it is essential to follow up to ensure continued sustainability and further development of the community. Consider a VTT (Vocational Training Team). A VTT is a group of professionals who travel to another country to provide training and expertise, thereby increasing the level of local knowledge in any given field. It is also a fun way to spend a vacation and create long lasting camaraderie. VTTs can also be funded by Global Grants

Dilip Mirchandani

(RC Ronse-Renaix) D-2130 Belgium

WASH-RAG Ambassador

e-mail: dilip@rafano.be Tel: 0475410943

