

Questions

The Kenyan Education Sector Support Program (KESSP) includes an initiative to develop school infrastructure, and SWASH+ researchers were keen to see what impact these funds had. For their research they selected five schools in Bondo District, and another three which received infrastructure improvements provided by Water.org based on the KESSP model, in Nyando District. Researchers wanted to see if school infrastructure committees had enough **training**, and how they **prioritized Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)** in their schools. They also wanted to explore the **adequacy of the KESSP budget**, and assess the **quality of designs**—a key priority given that no KESSP funded schools were able to follow the latrine design provided to them. Another question was whether **monitoring was carried out appropriately**, and if the **roles and responsibilities of stakeholders** for maintenance were clear. A final consideration was to **assess the sustainability** of KESSP projects.

Research

Data were collected in June and July 2009 through direct observations and structured interviews with head teachers and other school infrastructure committee members from schools that had previously received KESSP funding for water, sanitation, or hygiene projects and in July, 2009 in schools in which Water.org implemented the KESSP latrine and washroom design. Interviews about attitudes, perceptions, and use of washrooms in particular were also conducted with a convenience sample of girls from Water.org's KESSP latrine design schools.

Findings and Recommendations

Training: Respondents from former KESSP schools expressed overall satisfaction with the amount of training they received but noted that operations and maintenance training was insufficient.

WASH Prioritization: Schools with KESSP funds prioritized infrastructure like fencing and classrooms rather than low-cost education initiatives focusing on hygiene, and safe drinking water systems.

Budget and funding: Budgets or plans for maintenance and repair were lacking in KESSP plans, posing a threat to both the effectiveness and sustainability of investments.

Latrine/washroom design: Schools need multiple acceptable design options as the KESSP recommended design didn't fit all situations for all schools. Particularly, there is room for improvement in all schools to make washrooms more acceptable to girls.

Quality: The construction of demonstration latrines for local workers may help avoid pitfalls in the implementation of construction plans. However, despite pitfalls that occurred, schools were satisfied with the workmanship and quality of the local workers they had contracted.

Monitoring: Only the District Education Office was actively involved in monitoring the KESSP projects and often only once projects were complete. The Ministry of Education should seek greater buy-in from experts at the Ministries of Public Works and the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation to ensure quality infrastructure and project design.

Roles and responsibilities: A lack of clarity led to some conflict between the school infrastructure committees and school management committees. This can be avoided by better planning before projects begin and also by designating roles for latrine cleaning, water provision and treatment in order to ensure sustained use.

Maintenance: Schools need to designate people who are responsible for identifying and applying resources, and explaining how and when repairs are to be done.

Sustainability: Community ownership and involvement beyond the planning stage was quite low and must be addressed if schools are to benefit. Of particular importance is the need to supply information about costs of WASH programs during the planning stage to garner greater community understanding of the need for their participation.



A KESSP latrine being painted
Photo: CARE/Brooks Keene (2009)

Based on **Scaling School Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene in Rural Kenya: An Assessment of the Kenya Education Sector Support Program** by the Center for Global Safe Water at Emory University (2009), available at <http://www.swashplus.org>.

SWASH+ is a five-year applied research program to identify, develop and test innovative approaches to school-based water, sanitation and hygiene interventions in Nyanza Province, Kenya. Implementing partners are CARE, Emory University, the Government of Kenya, the Kenya Water for Health Organisation (KWAHO), the Great Lakes University of Kisumu (GLUK), and Water.org (formerly Water Partners International).