



# WASH in Schools

## A Pre-requisite for realizing girls right to access quality education

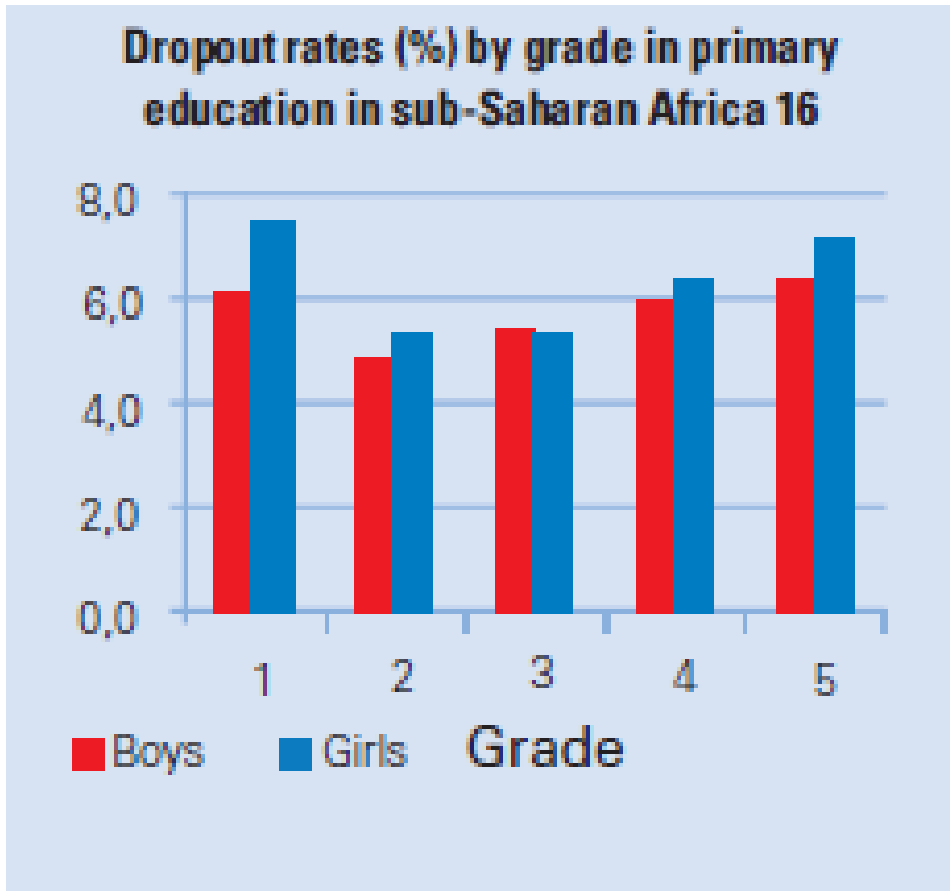
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# The Policy Context in East Africa

- Girls access to education recognized as a human right by all governments
- National policies introduced to deliver international and regional frameworks e.g.: Beijing Platform for Action (1995), Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All (EFA) (2000), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
- Universal primary education and removal of school fees is a common feature of national education policies
- Ethiopia and Kenya introduced separate policies on gender underlining access to education as key to national development e.g.: Ethiopia's National women's policy and National action plan on gender equality

# Challenge- The gap between policy and practice



- High enrolment rates reported (MDGs)
- National data masks inequalities i.e. poverty, gender and location that determine girls access to education
- Only 7 out of 10 children will attend to the last primary grade.
- Girls are more likely to dropout, with rates as high as 59% in Ethiopia

(Source: Plan International, BIAG campaign 2012)

# WASH in schools in Ethiopia

- More than 68% of schools lack access to safe water & sanitation services
- Where the facilities exist there are huge gaps in terms of the standard of the services
- High levels of non-functionality and break down
- Lack of financing and systems for operations, maintenance and management of services
- Lack of plan and budget for WASH in education budgets (capitation grants not inclusive of WASH)





**Lack of WASH facilities in schools affects girls disproportionately**



# Lack of WASH in schools- Poor Learning



*'Every student brings water to school. If I forget to bring water, I will stay thirsty till I get back home. On sunny days, we become so thirsty we lose interest in following lessons attentively. We feel sleepy and bored. To minimise our thirst we avoid playing during break time'*

***Kele, 12 year old female student  
(Ethiopia)***

# Lack of WASH in schools- Absenteeism



*“We wake up early in the morning, around 4am to collect water. This leads us to be late for class. Sometimes we may miss class or be very tired when we reach school.”*

***Female student from Hintallo  
(Northern Ethiopia)***



# Lack of WASH in schools- violence and trauma



In rural areas, girls have to walk for around 3 hours to fetch water, making them late for class or causing them to miss school altogether.

Their journey to find water is often through dark, unsafe environments, exposing them to threats of violence, sexual abuse and other health hazards.



# Lack of WASH in schools, no dignity or privacy



*“In the past the toilets had no doors and there was an opening between the rooms for the boys and the girls. There used to be a long line for the toilets during break time. The boys followed us and laughed at us when they saw us in the toilet.”*

***Female student at the school in Konso, Ethiopia***







# Lack of WASH in schools- poor health

- 40% of cases of diarrhoea cases are contracted in schools (WHO)
- Students miss 272 million school days each year because of wash related illnesses
- Schools with poor water, hygiene and sanitation are high risk environments for children and staff



# Menstrual Hygiene Matters

- In Sub-Saharan Africa 10% of school-age girls who have reached puberty do not attend school during menstruation (Tearfund, 2008).
- Cultural taboos and traditional beliefs challenge the prioritization of MHM in schools
- Lack of separate latrines for girls and MHM facilities result in girls missing school days to avoid stigma and discrimination

# WaterAid's work on WASH and girls education







‘Most of the older girls would miss at least 3-5 days of class per month when they are on their menses and others would request to leave class earlier to go home to change and shower. Now the girls attendance is consistent and they are more attentive in class as they have a place to change and water to clean themselves.’

**Teacher from Mpalanga primary school in Bahi District, Tanzania**



# WASH facilities accessible to all



# School WASH- Key to keep girls in school

## Resulting impact

- Improves cognitive function and attention
- Reduces days missed from school; provides more time on the learning task; and increases dignity and safety
- Due to inadequate school WASH many girls are currently not meeting their learning potential

# Key challenges

- Sustained functionality of WASH systems
- Prioritization of WASH in education sector and its relevance in equal access to education
- Lack of clarity of roles and responsibilities amongst government bodies
- Lack financing for WASH operation and maintenance costs



# Thank you!

