

WASH for Children in Emergencies



Why focus on children?

- ★ Children under 18 make up a large percentage of the population and they are therefore major stakeholders in an emergency WASH response.
- ★ Young children are more susceptible to WASH related diseases and focussing on their needs makes for more effective programming
- ★ Children and young people are often more flexible and willing to take on new ideas
- ★ Children often look after their younger siblings and are in a good position to teach them about hygiene
- ★ The management of babies' and children's excreta is not dealt with systematically and represents an unaddressed risk to health
- ★ Working supportively with children can help to allay their distress and restore their mental health following the traumatic events of a disaster or conflict

**Working with children
should be a priority
not an add on.....**

Save the Children Research

Save the Children (UK) received funding from the Humanitarian Innovation Fund to begin to examine how children's needs are met in emergency WASH interventions and what materials are available to support WASH practitioners. Following a questionnaire survey, interviews with key informants and field visits to Ethiopia and Bangladesh, a discussion document was produced.

The research found that there are some very good examples of how children's needs are taken into account in WASH emergency programming but the response to children tends to be ad hoc and there is rarely a strategy in place that considers both the hardware and software WASH needs of children of different ages. Children are rarely given a say in how facilities are provided or asked for feedback on existing facilities but this practice could make interventions much more effective.

A focus on children should not come at the expense of other target groups but should have a higher priority than is currently the case, given the vulnerability of young children to WASH related diseases and the fact that they often make up a sizeable percentage of the population in emergencies.

Contact Mark Buttle for more information: m.buttle@savethechildren.org.uk

1yr

Most deaths from diarrhoea occur in this age group.

<2yr

Most sickness and deaths from WASH related disease occur in this age group.

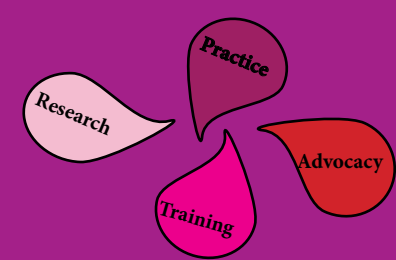
40%

of all deaths in children occur in the first month of life. Basic hygiene can help to prevent many of these deaths.



Anne Lloyd/SCUK

Hygiene Promotion



Children come in different shapes and sizes

Different ages

Different abilities

Different needs

Giving children a say in WASH

Ask yourself:

- ★ Have I listened to the voices of children of different ages in the assessment?
- ★ Have I enabled children of different ages to have a say in how the WASH response is carried out?
- ★ Have I involved children in designing visual aids and hygiene promotion activities?
- ★ Have I asked children of different ages if they are easily able to use the toilets, waterpoints, taps, water containers?
- ★ Have I asked girls and boys if they feel safe using the toilets or waterpoints?
- ★ Have I asked boys and girls what hygiene items they need?
- ★ Have I asked girls how they manage their periods and what they need to do this more easily? (Including sanitary materials, privacy, laundry or disposal facilities etc.)
- ★ Are young people represented on WASH committees?
- ★ Do children know how to give feedback on the WASH programme or complain about abuses by staff?



The next newsletter will focus on **Vulnerability and making WASH safer**
Please send contributions including photos, suggestions and field examples to: Mkan61101@aol.com or suzanne.ferron@gmail.com



Sanitation Solutions



Children will have different requirements for excreta management. For example: children under three rarely use latrines and only 25% of children under five use them. Even older children will not always use latrines because:

- They are afraid of the dark
- The squatting hole is too big
- They are afraid of snakes, insects or rats
- They are afraid of falling into the pit
- There are not enough toilets and they cannot wait (limited bowel and bladder control)
- They are too smelly
- Parents prevent them because of the mess, they can't keep an eye on them or they feel latrines are contaminated with adult's faeces or evil spirits

Space for carers taking young children to the toilet should be included in toilet designs (this is also useful for carers of people with disabilities)

Children of different ages and abilities should be involved in helping to design facilities that are suitable and that they will be happy to use and also in the siting of facilities.

Use appropriate dimensions for squatting plates, height of locks and handwashing facilities

For communal toilets ensure that systems for maintenance and cleaning are in place that do not exploit children or discriminate against girls

For communal toilets ensure that facilities for managing menstrual hygiene are provided

Ensure modifications for children with disabilities e.g. turning circle for wheelchair, handrails, seats, accessible locks and handles etc.

In communal latrines, ensure path is wide enough for two people to pass each other



Kerine Deniel/ACF Spain



Rink de Lange MSF



Golam Morshad/Oxfam GB



Anne Lloyd/SCUK

The benefits of safe, private sanitation for children of different ages are numerous:

- Improvements in health and nutrition
- Improvements in school performance and cognition
- Increase in school enrolment and retention

How well do we provide for babies and children of different ages in an emergency?



Hygiene Promotion



Keeping children safe

★ A Child Safeguarding Policy

Where organisations are working with children they have a duty to keep them safe by ensuring that the necessary policies and procedures are in place and that staff receive training on these. ALL WASH staff have a responsibility to keep abreast of such policies and procedures.

★ Health and safety

Children are at risk from accidents due to negligence of staff and contractors working in the WASH sector. ALL staff and contractors have a 'duty of care' to those using their services. Fatalities in the WASH sector involving children have occurred in several emergencies. WASH staff must make sure that parents and children are aware of the risks as well as taking precautions to ensure that dangerous areas are fenced off or dangerous procedures such as well construction and the use of water tankers or heavy machinery is carried out as safely as possible.

★ Gender based violence

Poorly constructed and sited toilets without lighting are often locations for gender based violence and girls can feel particularly vulnerable. Boys and girls can also often feel vulnerable collecting water. Involve girls and boys separately in the siting of facilities and obtain feedback from them on how safe they feel.



Golam Morshad/Oxfam GB

According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is anyone under the age of **18** years old.

The dangers of using water buckets without lids

Drowning can occur in even a shallow amount of liquid in an uncovered bucket. The 2008 WHO 'World Report on Child Injury Prevention' describes how a mother in India left her daughter alone for a few minutes only to find that she had drowned in 10cm of water. Cheap plastic buckets without lids have been replacing the traditional narrow necked container known as a kodam. The report notes that a similar problem was observed 15 years ago in the US by the consumer product safety commission who recommended a ban on this type of bucket and an information and education campaign to warn parents.

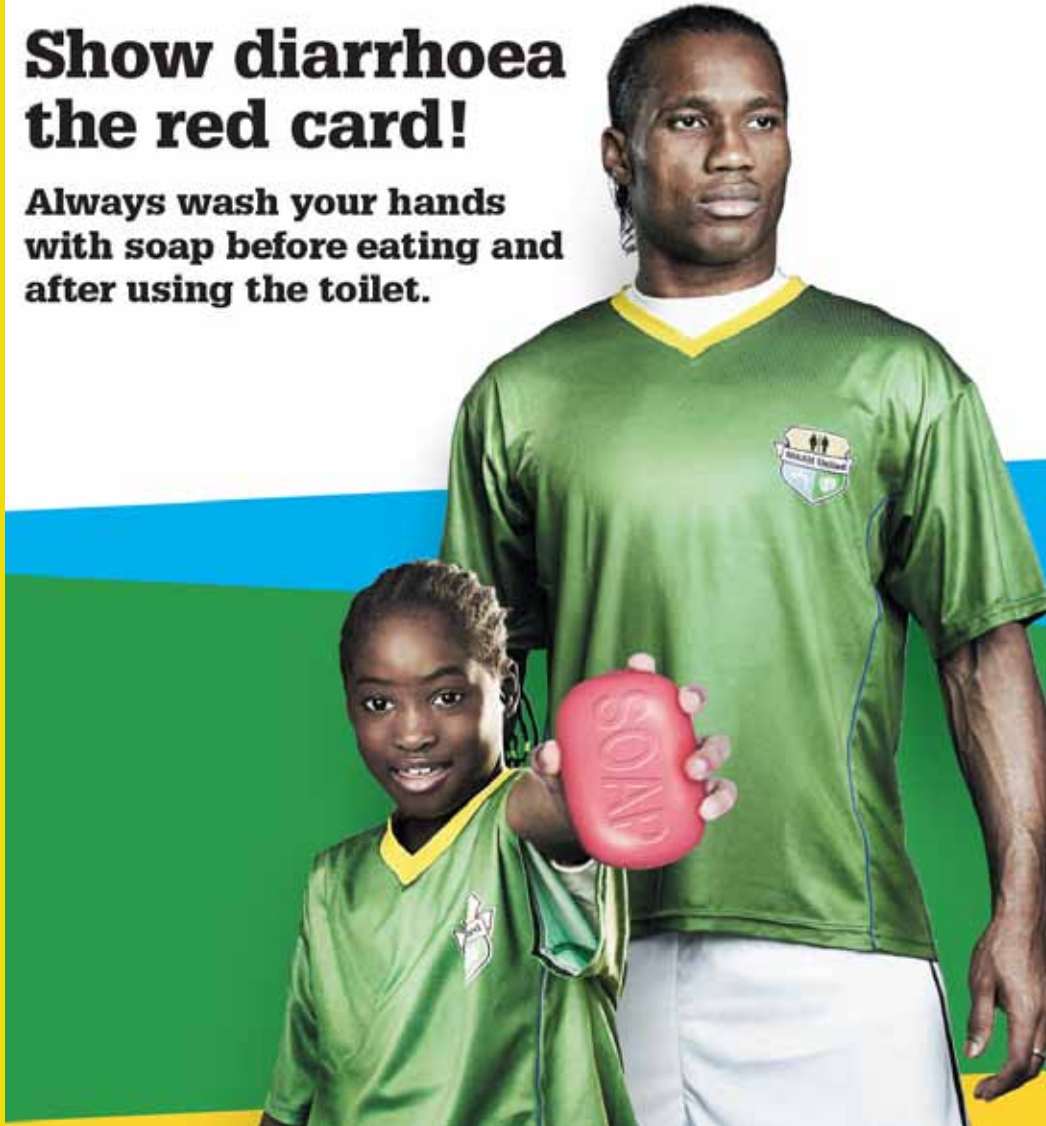
Source: WHO (2008) World Report on Child Injury Prevention, WHO Geneva and Unicef

Hygiene Promotion in Emergencies No 4

Check out **WASH UNITED's** website for ideas on how to work with children!

Show diarrhoea the red card!

Always wash your hands with soap before eating and after using the toilet.



WASH United



WASH United is a club that fights for social change. It's a club in which school children, political decision makers, development partners, and ordinary people from around the world stand united with some of the world's biggest sport stars to realize a common dream: safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene for all.

WASH United has developed a unique approach that helps to transform toilet access and good hygiene from a low priority to a personal aspiration. [Click here for more information.](#)



The three finger pledge of WASH United: 1) Always use a toilet, 2) Always wash your hands with soap before eating and after using the toilet, 3) Get three people to also take this pledge.

Hygiene Promotion



Useful Resources

Working with children

Oxfam (2012) Working with children in Humanitarian WASH Programmes, briefing paper available from: <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/working-with-children-in-humanitarian-wash-programmes-298948> last accessed 16.09.13

World Vision (2006) Children in Emergencies Manual, available from http://childprotection.wikischolars.columbia.edu/file/view/Children+in+Emergencies+Manual_World+Vision.pdf last accessed 16.2.13

UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Listen and Learn: Participatory Assessment with Children and Adolescents, July 2012, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4ffe4af2.html> [accessed 9 May 2013]

School WASH in emergencies

The links to the WASH for Schoolchildren in Emergencies, Teacher's Guidebook and the flashcards are included below:

Teachers' Guidebook: http://www.unicef.org/wash/schools/files/WASH_in_Schools_in_Emergencies_Guidebook_for_teachers_.pdf

Flashcards (Afghanistan/Pakistan): http://www.unicef.org/wash/schools/files/WinS_in_Emergencies_Flash_Cards_Afghanistan_Pakistan.pdf

Flashcards (Africa): http://www.unicef.org/wash/schools/files/WinS_in_Emergencies_flashcards__Africa.pdf

Flashcards (Latin America): http://www.unicef.org/wash/schools/files/WinS_in_Emergencies_flashcards__latin_America.pdf

Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM)

Information books for boys and girls on MHM and puberty from a variety of countries (Tanzania, Ghana, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Cambodia, India, Nepal and Uganda) available from:

<http://www.growandknow.org/books.html>

(look at 'publications' and 'future expansion')

Child Protection

Child Protection Working Group (CPWG) (2012), Minimum standards for child protection in humanitarian action. Available from <http://cpwg.net/resource/minimum-standards-for-child-protection-in-humanitarian-action-cpwg-2012/>

