

Introduction

Lack of safe water and sanitation is the world's single largest cause of illness, 2.5 billion people are still without access to improved sanitation and 1.2 billion have no sanitation facilities according to the (United Nations, 2008). Everyday, diarrhea diseases from easily preventable causes claim the lives of approximately 5000 children throughout the world according to (WHO and UNICEF 2005). The annual incidence of diarrhea is 3.5 to 4.6 episodes per child per year making it one of the top child killers.



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene promotion for schools

is a project funded by EC (European Commission) and was implemented by Nairobi City water & Sewerage Company and Practical Action Eastern Africa. The project targeted 16 schools in the informal settlements (9 in Mukuru and 7 in Kibera)



Working with school pupils

Entry to the schools was done by working in collaboration with the department of City Education where the implementers worked closely with District Advisers to schools in the areas of jurisdiction. The first training on PHAST (Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation) targeted all the Head teachers/deputies and the club patrons. This was meant to sharpen the teachers' skills on how the Child to child approach is applied in a school set- up and at community level.



How it was done

A peer review team comprising of representatives from the schools held several meetings within the targeted schools. It emerged that water and sanitation was a major problem. Most of the schools did not have piped water and safe sanitation. Following this, it was agreed that all schools that did not have piped water were expected to connect water to their schools.



Hardware investment

Through the project rainwater harvesting and roof catchments was done in all the schools. In addition, storage water tanks with a capacity of 10,000 liters and 2 hand wash facilities were provided with support from the project.



School Clubs

Existing clubs were used to promote health and hygiene initiatives within the schools in order to promote sustainability. Club patron's selected eleven members from each club in every school i.e. 5 boys and 6 girls who were then trained on personal hygiene and sanitation practices they were also expected to be peer educators to other members of the school reaching 5 pupils each. The peer educators disseminated health messages regarding hygiene and safe sanitation practices to the pupils as expected with facilitation from the project. The lessons were carried out in the evenings for a period of 3 months.



Child to Child Approach

School pupils were used as effective communicators and agents of change. Children have special roles in spreading health messages to others. They are good imitators in that, when they spend time with older ones they tend to copy and do as the old ones do. Also groups of children, who are influential and popular, can influence their peers in away that adults can never do Children in their innocence often remind adults that their actions are unwise or unsafe because children have a will, skills and motivation to pass knowledge to others.



Global Hand washing Day

Global Hand washing Day was initiated in 2008 by the Global Public-Private Partnership for Hand washing with Soap and is endorsed by a wide array of Governments, International institutions, Civil Society organizations, NGOs, Private companies and individuals around the globe.



Conclusion

By working with schools in the informal settlements the project significantly improved hygiene and safe sanitation practices amongst pupils and the general community through child to child and child to parents' approaches.

