NALA Case Study:
Sustainability of WASH in schools

Background

Sustainability of WASH infrastructure beyond the life of a project seems like one of the main challenges many projects face.

NALA has been exploring ways of ensuring a package exists in each schools consisting of latrines, water stations and soap (by the latrines, and by the classes or eating area).

Methodologies include:

1. Small scale WASH grants for schools and community ownership
2. Community activities in schools
3. Improved design of latrines for comfort and easy maintenance
4. Exploration of rental scheme for infrastructure

1. Small scale grants (70% by NALA/30% by the community)

Aim to increase ownership by the school management and the community.

An application process in which each school proposes a plan, and an estimated budget, to improve its existing WASH situation. If approved, seventy percent of the cost is provided by the project team and the remainder is provided by the parent teacher association (PTA) and/or the community, either in the form of money, or in the equivalent amount of labor and other forms of work.

Examples of projects that were funded this way include constructing new latrines, rain water harvesting systems, renovations of water fountains and tanks, constructing concrete sinks for hand washing, adding doors to latrines for privacy. The construction and maintenance were supported by a NALA WASH officer.

2. Community activities in schools

Aim to improve immediate access to water and latrine usage experience.

These projects are usually managed by the health club teacher, health club or PTA, and include activities that support behavioral change, such as:

- For latrines: painting of latrines, creation of curtains for privacy in stalls, creation of cleaning rotations.

- For hand washing: creating a painted trail between latrine and washing station, positioning a stand and a jerrican by the latrines, and setting up scheme foor filling the jerrican, decorating water bottles for carrying water to school.

3. Improved design of latrines for comfort and easy maintenance

The aim of the new design is to compete with open defecation and outdo it.

For the latrine to be able to compete it needs to be well ventilated, to provide privacy, to be easily accessible, it should be friendly (not be dark, or too small and claustrophobic. If the latrine has a pit and a hole, it should be structured in a way that there is no fear of falling in) and easy to clean and maintain. The NALA latrine aims to provide the perks of defecating by the river (water for washing), but add an extra added value through the availability of soap in a way that it is hard to take it away or steal it.

4. Rental Scheme

Another that NALA is currently exploring for providing infrastructure to schools and ensuring maintenance, is through renting out relevant infrastructure to schools (such as watertanks, piping) for little or no money.
In such a scheme, a clear maintenance protocol will be created, and maintenance of infrastructure by school will be audited regularly. Schools can then earn the right for ownership, or for additional infrastructure and equipment through excellent maintenance track record.

Questions to consider:

1. Is this relevant for your context? Do you see the same usage and maintenance problems in your context?
2. Are any of those solutions applicable in your context? How should they be changed or modified to fit?
3. Are there other potential solutions that can improve maintenance and upkeep of WASH in schools?