Equity, Scalability & Sustainability in UNICEF WASH Programming:

Evidence from UNICEF Evaluations 2007-2015

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Why this synthesis is important

- UNICEF spends a lot on WASH: $868 million in 2015
- 35% of the spending is for WASH in emergencies; ***39% is for rural water supply/sanitation and hygiene/WASH in schools***; 26% is for 'general' WASH

- WASH is an SDG priority. The SDG seeks "availability and sustainable management", "universal and equitable access", and to pay "special attention to the needs of … those in vulnerable situations"

- Equity, scalability, and sustainability are immediate and future concerns of UNICEF's WASH programme

Objective of the Evaluation Synthesis

- To inform the development of the next UNICEF WASH strategy as it considers how to achieve these three cross-cutting objectives:

❖ Equity: That the services produced by the WASH programme shall benefit vulnerable or marginalized groups, and thereby reduce inequalities between them and more favoured populations.

❖ Scalability: That the programmes have expanded from the limited initial scale to reach all feasible communities and populations still lacking services

❖ Sustainability: That the programme outputs, outcomes and impacts persist after the withdrawal of all forms of assistance from the external development agency

Methodology / Limitations

- Source material: 64 evaluations completed by UNICEF country offices between 2008-2015, plus 10 sustainability checks conducted 1 or more years after the end of a WASH project

- Density: 78% of the items had relevant material on Scalability; 91% on Equity; and 100% on Sustainability

- Key limitations: higher income regions are under-represented in the evidence base; there are no standardized approaches to look at these themes

Report & Presentation Structure

1. EQUITY
- **WASH equity and the programme cycle**
- **WASH equity by demographic group**
- **WASH equity by sub-sector**

2. SCALABILITY
- **Models of going to scale**
- **Determinants of going to scale**
- **Going to scale by sub-sector**

3. SUSTAINABILITY
- **Models of sustainability**
- **Determinants of sustainability**
- **Sustainability by sub-sector**

CONCLUSIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

WASH equity summation

WASH needs generally correlate with equity interests

Only 25% of the programs displayed a well-conceived, equity-focused geographical targeting strategy

Program attention is greatest to females and the poor, especially in technical design and in management

Women report notable satisfaction with all 3 WASH interventions

Evidence of impact is rare except for effect on women and girls. Wealth, age, disability etc are rarely examined

There is little to nil evidence of any impact on girls' education outcomes [enrolment, absenteeism, repetition and dropping out, academic success]

Going to scale summation

WASH programming spreads through spontaneous diffusion; organized replication; and institutionalized uptake. Both replication and uptake are in wide use

No UNICEF-wide, sector-wide or national standards or benchmarks were ever used to judge if a program had reached significant or optimal scale

8 determinants repeatedly appeared as critical factors in going to scale

In almost all settings there are one or more technically effective approaches that can be applied at scale

Equity and scalability can conflict: particularly around the issue of subsidies or when rehabilitation works divert available funds from expansion

Specific actions can operationalize the policy commitment, e.g. developing technical standards across all partners. However, policy alignment is often weak

Sustainability summation

4 elements are always used to judge sustainability: presence and functionality; usage; usage across 'generations'; operation and maintenance

3 variable factors may also be present: the particular behaviors sought; acceptable 'slippage' over time; financial and technical independence expectations

As with going to scale, there are 8 critical factors in achieving sustainability.

The quality of programme design and implementation was a common weakness: insufficient concentration, weak links with Health, and infrastructure quality

The poor quality of self-built latrines was commonly noted. All income levels are generally unwilling to upgrade latrines

Building sustainability expectations from the start has useful long term effects

Overall conclusions

Many problems originate in and are preventable in the design phase; most problems can be anticipated

The conceptual underpinnings are weak in several instances, but can benefit from making explicit the implicit models already identified through 'learning-by-doing'

Trade-offs among objectives are unavoidable as long as there are resource limitations

WASH interventions are achieving some but not all desired social goals

Sanitation and hygiene is the sub-sector that best reaches equity, scalability, and sustainability objectives

Significant knowledge gaps remain

Recommendations

1. DEVELOP THE EVIDENCE BASE—
- **[Examples] Willingness to pay and optimal tariff setting**
- **Effective handwashing promotion strategies**
- **Risk mitigation for factors beyond program control**

2. BETTER UNDERSTAND THEORIES OF CHANGE—
- **[Examples] The role of WASH in schools in girls education**
- **Why households resist/accept to improve initial latrines**
- **Social benefit of participation in a community WASH body**

3. IMPROVE PROGRAM DESIGN and RESULTS FRAMEWORKS
- **[Examples] Examine equity within the Situation Analysis**
- **Improve outcome and enabling environment indicators**
- **Plan for post-project behavioral reinforcement**

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