Equity, Scalability & Sustainability in UNICEF WASH Programming:

Presentation for the UNICEF Executive Board
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UNICEF Evaluation Office
Objective of the Evaluation Synthesis

• To inform the development of the next UNICEF WASH strategy, with a focus on three cross-cutting objectives:

  ❖ **Equity**: That the services delivered through 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 populations lacking services

  ❖ **Sustainability**: That the programme results endure after the withdrawal of external assistance
Findings on equity

• WASH needs generally correlate with equity interests…but only 25% of the programs displayed a sound, 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 evidence of any impact on girls’ education outcomes.
Findings on going to scale

- 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 used to guide decisions on going to scale.
- In almost all settings, there are technically effective approaches that can be applied at scale.
- Equity, sustainability and scalability can conflict: e.g. in funding subsidies or rehabilitation works versus expansion.
- Policy alignment is often weak.
Findings on sustainability

• Sustainability is assessed against a wide range of criteria

• The quality of programme design and implementation was a common weakness: insufficient concentration, weak health sector links, and infrastructure quality.

• Common findings include the poor quality of self-built latrines; and general reluctance to upgrade latrines, across all income levels.

• 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 sometimes weak, but can benefit from making explicit 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.
- The sanitation and hygiene sub-sector best reaches equity, scalability, and sustainability objectives.
- Significant knowledge gaps remain.
Recommendations

1. Develop the evidence base
2. Better understand theories of change
3. Improve program design and results frameworks
Thank you for your attention!

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