

An Initiative To Introduce Water Sanitation and Hygiene Education in Schools through WASH Clubs in rural areas of Bahawalpur District, Pakistan



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Pakistan Rural Workers Social Welfare Organization (PRWSWO) has focused its one of priority on promotion of child rights and has taken number of steps to protect the rights of children by adopting multi-dimensional approaches.

The rural areas of District Bahawalpur is surrounded by sandy dunes has lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities. Poor hygiene are associated with skin diseases, acute respiratory infections (ARIs), and diarrheal diseases, dysentery, Malaria and typhoid. Diseases related to inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene are a huge burden It is estimated that 88% of diarrheal disease is caused by unsafe water supply and inadequate sanitation and hygiene. Schools are often more than just places for learning and behavior change. If School water sanitation and hygiene facilities are absent, or are badly maintained and used, Schools become risky places where diseases are transmitted. Schools can also pollute the natural environment in such a way that it causes health hazards for the community at large. Inadequate sanitation and a lack of toilets lead to high school dropout rates, in particular among girls once they reach menstruation age. If there are no sanitation facilities at school where privacy is respected, girls will not attend classes when they are menstruating, or even drop out of school altogether.

Hygiene education primarily aims at changing behavior toward good or safe practices in relation to personal, water, food, domestic and public hygiene. Lack of access to WASH can affect a child's nutritional status in many ways. Existing evidence supports at least three direct pathways: via diarrhoeal diseases, intestinal parasite infections and environmental intestinal infections. WASH may also impact nutritional status indirectly by necessitating walking long distances in search of water and sanitation facilities and diverting a mother's time away from child care. PRWSWO established WASH Clubs in 20 schools aiming to introduce water, sanitation & hygiene education through implementation of various activities in schools

Like WASH related interventions in school & plan to address these needs, Implementation of BCC campaign, Daily Group hand washing at Group Hand washing station (GHWS) activity supervised by teachers and WASH club members, Celebrating hygiene events / days like Global Hand Washing Day, World Toilet day, World Water day etc. WASH club has an important role in schools but also advocate community by disseminating WASH messages during WASH campaigns at community level. It covered the topics such as Importance of Latrines and Personal hygiene, correct use of Toilets. Need for cleanliness of Sanitation facilities, Benefits of safe drinking water.

At the end; it was observed that School children are great agent of change. They are parents and leaders of tomorrow. They often influenced by peer culture. They hold strong beliefs and principles on moral dilemmas. They are interested in mastering physical challenges and experimenting with new behaviors The community adopted new practices to promote hygiene and sanitation facilities

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