

Safe water, sanitation & hygiene in refugee schools

An assessment of good practice in private schools in Base
Camp, Nakivale Refugee Settlement, Isingiro District

FIELDWORK

10 June – 27 November 2023



01 PROJECT SUMMARY Why WASH matters in schools

Clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene keep students and staff healthy, prevent waterborne disease and make learning possible. This project set out to assess and promote good WASH practice in refugee private schools in Base Camp, Nakivale.

1,624

learners

served by one water tank

434

learners

share one toilet block

350

children

share another toilet block

Figures observed at individual schools during the assessment.

How the project works

01

Assess

Review water sources, sanitation facilities and hygiene practices in each school.

02

Intervene

Safe water, better latrines and handwashing stations, and hygiene promotion.

03

Build capacity

Train school staff and community members to own and maintain WASH.

04

Monitor & share

Track improvements and share lessons with other settlements and schools.

Scope

From 10 June to 27 November 2023, the work focused on discovering and assessing private schools in Base Camp, Nakivale Refugee Settlement, together with an intern from Makerere University sponsored by Global Water Works (USA). The team applied knowledge from the Maji Preneurs Summit (February 2023) and WASEU, held in Kampala and at Makerere University.

02 BACKGROUND

YAREN and WASH

Active since 2017, YAREN works with refugees and people in need across Nakivale Refugee Settlement, Kampala (Ndejje, Wakiso) and Bugiri District (Muwayo Town Council), in education, health, hygiene and sanitation, livelihoods and women's empowerment, and humanitarian response. In WASH, YAREN advocates for safe water, adequate sanitation and good hygiene, so that refugees can live in a healthy, sustainable environment.

Our WASH objectives

- Provide water filters within the settlement
- Build and maintain toilets and handwashing stations
- Promote hygiene and behaviour change, focusing on schools
- Run hygiene and sanitation classes and workshops
- Advocate for clean water with authorities and communities
- Distribute water filtering and sanitation kits to households
- Build rainwater harvesting facilities
- Work with authorities and NGOs on WASH challenges

Activities in schools

- Building and refurbishing toilets and handwashing stations in refugee private schools
- Hygiene promotion workshops for students, teachers and the wider community
- Training teachers and staff to manage WASH in schools
- Rainwater harvesting programme
- Monitoring and evaluating the WASH situation to guide planning

Partners

The MBA Academy (UK)

Field Ready (USA)

Sukhi222 International (USA)

Yorghas Foundation (Poland)

GAYO (Ghana)

Needslist (Canada)

LICOM International Uganda

Global Water Works

Carrier Chapter Uganda



Mission: creating a better society for high-risk communities by tackling poverty and unemployment, and building self-resilience.

YAREN Organisation

Our approach and framework

- 1 Needs assessment.** Surveys, interviews and observations to identify WASH challenges, drawing on earlier research (WaterAid, 2018).
- 2 Designing interventions.** Plans developed with the project team to address the gaps found.
- 3 Implementing.** Building or rehabilitating toilets, hygiene promotion workshops and sanitation training in schools.
- 4 Monitoring & evaluation.** Collecting data on access to water and sanitation and on hygiene practice.
- 5 Collaboration.** Working with community members, local authorities and partners for sustainability.

Six indicators we assessed

Access to safe water and sanitation	Handwashing stations available	Regular cleaning and maintenance
Health and hygiene education	Waste management	Disaster risk reduction plans for WASH facilities

Questions we asked each school

- How many students and staff are there?
- Is there a sufficient supply of safe water?
- Are there separate toilets for boys and girls?
- How many handwashing stations work?
- How often are facilities cleaned and maintained?
- Are there health and hygiene education programmes?
- What waste management practices are in place?
- Is there a disaster risk reduction plan for WASH?
- Is there water storage?

04 WHAT WE SAW Conditions in the schools



children and their teachers share this toilet block.



learners and their teachers share this toilet.



ABOVE: Some schools have no access to water and buy it at a very high cost. This school has water storage serving 1,624 learners and their teachers, but hygiene measures are not well maintained.



"Let me go first, please." Children queue for the latrine.



Children exposed to risk: the school grounds are now used for brick-making.

04 · WHAT WE SAW, CONTINUED



The drainage is creating a source of contamination.



This water tap is at full risk of contamination.



Latrine conditions: what do you see here?



ABOVE: Another source of water used by schools. What is your view?

What this means. Poor drainage, exposed taps and crowded latrines put children at daily risk of waterborne disease. Schools without water pay high prices to private providers.

From quick fixes to lasting change

SHORT TERM

Fix infrastructure now

Repair leaking pipes and broken toilets; add handwashing stations.

Hygiene education

Short programmes on handwashing, personal hygiene and why clean water matters.

Essential supplies

Clean water, soap, hand sanitiser and other hygiene supplies in every school.

LONG TERM

Sustainable water

Rainwater harvesting, water filtration or boreholes for a reliable supply.

Better sanitation

Gender-separated, accessible toilets with proper waste management.

Capacity building

Training for teachers and managers; hygiene built into the curriculum.

Monitoring & evaluation

A regular system to track practice and sustain improvements.

PARTNERSHIPS

Work together

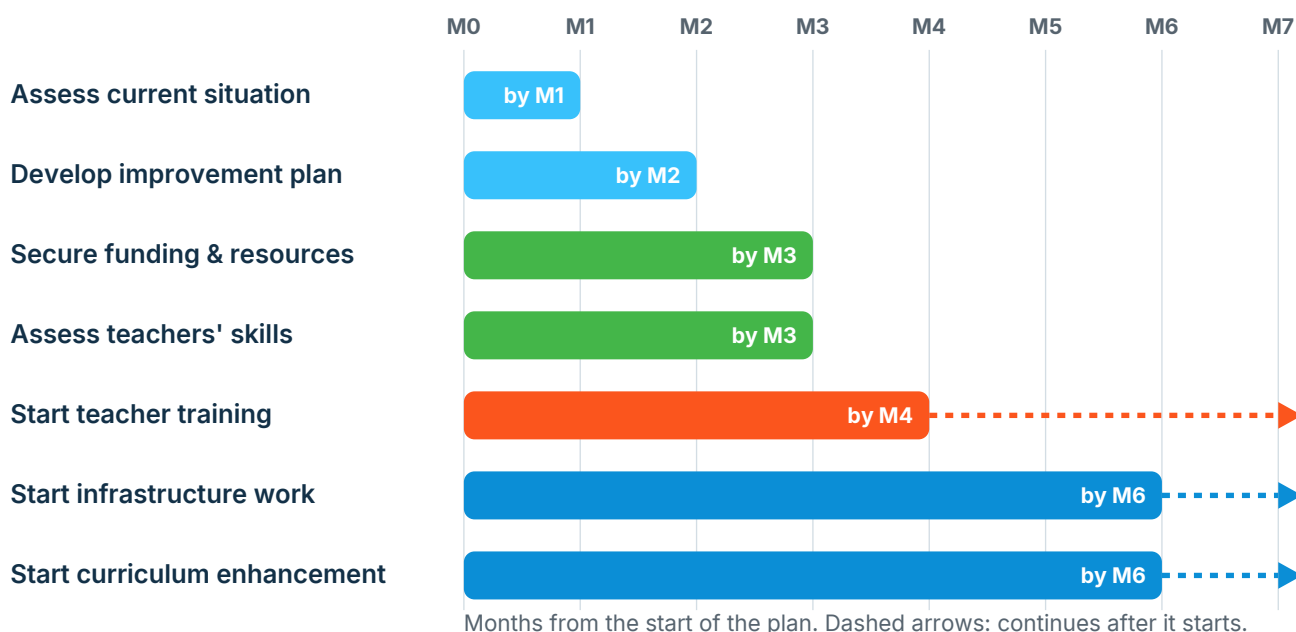
Engage NGOs, government and WASH stakeholders for expertise and resources.

Find funding

Seek donors focused on education, refugees and WASH to finance improvements.

06 ACTION PLAN Who does what, and by when

Led by the Refugee Education Coordinator, working with school administrators, teachers, community leaders, NGO partners, OPM/UNHCR and other stakeholders.



Monitoring and evaluation cycle



07 REFLECTION

Lessons and challenges

12 lessons and skills gained

- **Cultural sensitivity:** respecting diverse norms while promoting WASH
- **Context:** limited resources, overcrowding and weak infrastructure
- **Stakeholder engagement** with schools, parents, leaders, NGOs and government
- **Interviews and surveys** that ask the right, probing questions
- **Data analysis** with tools such as Excel or SPSS
- **Report writing:** findings, analysis, recommendations, action plan
- **Capacity building:** designing WASH trainings and workshops
- **Monitoring and evaluation** plans and indicators
- **Project management** of tasks, timelines and deliverables
- **Teamwork** in a multicultural, multidisciplinary team
- **Communication** with stakeholders through meetings and presentations
- **Problem-solving** and adapting to change

12 challenges we faced

- **Language barriers** with school staff and students
- **Limited resources:** funding, transport and equipment
- **Security:** long access processes and safety concerns
- **Poor roads and infrastructure** making school visits hard
- **Cultural and religious sensitivities** affecting trust
- **Reluctance** of some schools to share information
- **Time constraints** and conflicting schedules
- **Different priorities** among stakeholders
- **Technical problems** with software and equipment
- **Training gaps** among assessors
- **Bureaucracy:** delays in permissions and clearances
- **Low awareness** of WASH, so schools buy expensive water

08 CONCLUSION

A safer place to learn

The assessment shows an urgent need to invest in safe water sources, better sanitation facilities and comprehensive hygiene education in private schools. These measures prevent waterborne disease and create a learning environment where children can thrive.

Solving this needs school administrators, local authorities, NGOs and the refugee community working together, and the good practices developed can reach public schools and other parts of the settlement too. We recommend regular water-quality monitoring, maintenance and repair of existing facilities, handwashing stations, hygiene in the curriculum, and advocacy to secure funding and the attention of authorities.



We hope this report will serve as a catalyst for positive change in Base Camp Nakivale's schools.

YAREN Organisation



Workshop with YAREN staff and school representatives.



School representatives during the WASH workshop.



ABOVE: Facilitators lead the WASH workshop on standard latrines, cleanliness and safe water.

Sources

UNHCR (2017). Water availability snapshot: Uganda, Nakivale Refugee Settlement.

UNHCR (2017). Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion (WASH) in Schools.

UNHCR (2019). Nakivale Refugee Settlement Fact Sheet.

UNICEF (2011). WASH in Schools: Monitoring Package.

UNICEF (2018). WASH in Schools: A Compendium of Interventions in Low-Resource Settings.

UNICEF (2019). WASH in Schools Monitoring and Evaluation.

IFRC (2016). Guidance on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Schools.

Uganda Ministry of Health (2018). Uganda National WASH Inventory Report.

WaterAid (2018), cited in the needs assessment.

Acronyms

WASH: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene · NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation · GAYO: Green Africa Youth Organisation · LICOM: Living in Christ Omega Ministries · UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund · IASC: Inter-Agency Standing Committee · WHO: World Health Organization · UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees · OPM: Office of the Prime Minister



YAREN Organisation

YAREN empowers refugees and vulnerable communities in Uganda through skills training, livelihoods, education, health and community-led programmes. Since 2017.

CONTACT

Ziranumbu Hub, Makindye Ssabagabo, Wakiso District, Kampala, Uganda

P.O. Box 980170, Kajjansi-Kampala

info@yarenorganisation.org · www.yarenorganisation.org

+256 200 921 732 · +256 789 957 476