

SPLASH: Schools Promoting Learning Achievement through Sanitation and Hygiene

Good student performance in schools depends on many factors. One critical but often overlooked factor is whether children’s basic physical needs are being met, especially their need for/right to adequate safe drinking water and clean, accessible child friendly toilets. If these facilities are inadequate or absent, children will be more susceptible to illness, their attention and learning capacity will be compromised, and when girls reach puberty, they may simply stop coming to school altogether.

USAID believes that children have the right to a clean, safe and welcoming school environment. SPLASH is a four-year school WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) project funded by USAID Zambia to reach more than 240,300 primary school pupils in four districts of the Eastern Province (Chipata, Mambwe, Chadiza and Lundazi). SPLASH aims to improve pupils’ health, learning and performance by increasing their access to safe water and adequate sanitation and improving their hygiene and health practices at school and at home.

SPLASH works in 375 primary schools to improve WASH facilities such as boreholes and latrines and also provide a comprehensive hygiene improvement program focusing on healthy habits such as treating drinking water and hand washing with soap. In the past three years, SPLASH has provided access to safe drinking water and safe, clean latrines through 300 new or rehabilitated water points and 2,500 new latrine compartments. In addition, facilities and activities to promote menstrual hygiene management are helping older girls miss fewer days of schools each month and stay in school longer. Key program activities include:

- Constructing and rehabilitating school WASH facilities;
- Supporting hygiene habit formation with enabling technologies;
- Conducting a comprehensive menstrual hygiene management program for schools;
- Assuring a sustainable operations and maintenance system within existing Government of Zambia institutions and also through PTAs and private sector;
- Partnering with NGOs and the private sector to reach national level targets; and
- Advocating for a national policy and improved institutional environment for school WASH.

SPLASH trains teachers, PTA members and student leaders in School Led Total Sanitation, and develops WASH lessons and activities with educators through the official in-service teacher training system.



SPLASH expects that its activities will result in measurable improvements in school attendance by decreasing the number of days students are absent due to lack of water, illness or menstrual hygiene constraints, which in turn will increase student-teacher contact time that will contribute to improved performance in reading and other basic skills. We also expect a decrease in girls’ drop-out rates and (female) teacher attrition.

This four-year program is implemented by WASHplus (managed by FHI 360) and CARE/Zambia. For additional information, contact SPLASH Chief of Party Justin Lupele at jlupele@splashzambia.org.