



Sherien, Raghda and Marwa washing their hands in the celebration of the Global Hand Washing Day as a part of the Sponsorship School Health and Nutrition Program. Photo credit: Walaa Swiefy

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE FINANCING FOR SCHOOL WASH FACILITIES IN EGYPT

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The briefer was written by Mohini Venkatesh, Stephen Sara, and Nanditha Gopal. Copy-editing and formatting was done by Frannie Noble.

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For more information, please contact: Michael Abdalah (Michael.Abdalah@savethechildren.org); Mohini Venkatesh (mvenkatesh@savechildren.org)

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EGYPT

The Arab Republic of Egypt, situated in North Africa, has a land area of 1,001,450 km² and a total population of 83.3 million (density - 84 people per km²). It is a lower middle income country (GDP – 286.5 billion US\$, GDP per capita 3,436.3 US\$) (World Bank, 2014).

Administratively, the country is divided into 27 governorates, which are further divided into districts. Governorates are responsible for implementing national education and development policies. The country is 47% rural – agriculture is a large part of the rural economy, while the government is the largest urban employer.

In Egypt, pre-university education comprises primary schools from grades 1-6, preparatory (lower secondary) schools from grades 7-9 and secondary education for three years which is not compulsory. In 2012, expenditure on pre-university education was 48.4 billion EGP (7.93 billion US\$) or 3.12% of the GDP (254.7 billion US\$) for that year.

1. Executive Summary

In Egypt, the government invests in WASH in schools mainly through its national Ministry of Education (MoE) for maintenance and through an autonomous government entity called the General Authority on Educational Buildings (GAEB) for construction and maintenance. Both of these institutions are decentralized to the districts. In addition to these two agencies, there is the Holding Company for Water and Wastewater, which provides water and sewerage services to communities, including schools.

Egypt has national policies that define three broad levels of maintenance of school facilities, including WASH facilities. First, all schools receive a maintenance budget and have a paid maintenance person and janitor for simple maintenance of school facilities. The district education department is responsible for the second level of annual and urgent maintenance of school facilities. Lastly, the national government, through the GAEB, funds regular refurbishments of school facilities every three to five years, as well as emergency maintenance that cannot be managed by the districts.

The GAEB has WASH standards that are used for new construction projects and refurbishments. The national education sector plan for 2014-2030 includes strengthening institutional infrastructure as one of its three main priorities; however, this largely refers to information technology and does not include maintenance of WASH facilities.

The MoE has a decentralized system to allocate general maintenance funds to the districts, which includes WASH facilities maintenance, but not as a budgetary line-item. Current national allocations for general school maintenance are 210 million EGP (29.2 million US\$) per fiscal year, of which half goes to schools for simple maintenance while the remaining stays at district education department for annual and urgent maintenance needs of schools. The allocations for each school are calculated using a standard budget formula and student population number, and are used for general and sometimes WASH expenses. Based on figures received from 20 case-study schools, a median amount of 3,105 EGP (433 US\$) per school or about 6.15 EGP (0.86 US\$) per student is received each year for the simple maintenance needs of the entire school.

City councils or NGOs often manage municipal solid waste management services, which provide free services to schools; in the absence of this service, solid waste is burned on site. Schools also rely on community solutions and NGO support to fill funding and service gaps. All case study schools reported having a Board of Trustees (BOT), which is elected by MoE decree and comprises parents, teachers, the school principal and a social worker. Their responsibilities include approving school spending plans and maintaining ties with the community, the municipality and the MoE. School management committees (SMC) comprised of teachers support the implementation of plans. However, the BoT/SMCs only actively engage in WASH in eight of the 20 schools visited.

There are areas for improvement to achieve the simple and long term periodic maintenance of WASH facilities in schools. Although government budgets and expenditures have grown in the past few years due to increases in wages and inflation, maintenance budgets

for schools and district education departments have remained the same. This has meant a relative reduction in the allocations for school maintenance. Schools also find current simple maintenance allocations insufficient to meet their needs. Available data on the cost to maintain school WASH facilities indicate that it could be a substantial portion of a school's general maintenance budget, in some cases reaching 52% of the budget. The system for schools to request and receive maintenance support through the MoE and GAEB also does not function as intended. Government offices do not regularly respond to facility issues or consistently train and support schools to maintain their facilities.

Without a specific line item, WASH O&M is up to the discretion of schools. Only two of the 20 schools visited had developed a school budget with a WASH line item. The maintenance person is often unskilled to perform the WASH maintenance needed in schools, while the janitor (usually not paid a government wage) is generally unable to meet the cleaning needs of over 10 toilets and handwashing stations in a school. Consequently, the findings from visits to schools show that while the water and toilet facilities are functional, the school grounds and facilities are usually unclean or only somewhat clean. Some informants reported that the government auditing system creates hesitation to spend available school maintenance funds for legitimate school O&M issues. WASH supplies (soap, sanitary pads etc.)

were generally absent in schools.

Recommendations made by key informants and Save the Children staff to improve the O&M of WASH facilities in Egyptian schools were as follows:

- School representatives suggested improving coordination among all involved governmental bodies (GAEB, MoE & HCWW) to ensure timely annual, urgent, and emergency maintenance, as well as refurbishments.
- Increasing the role of BOTs in monitoring and fundraising for improving WASH facilities.
- Regular inspection and follow up of school facilities by district government authorities.
- Increase the maintenance budget to schools and include a line item for WASH to ensure that the funds are used for upkeep of toilets and handwashing stations. Ensure there is also a budget for ensuring menstrual hygiene supplies and facilities.
- Improvements to toilets (ensuring they are private, gender separated and disable friendly) and running water systems. Regular inspection of water quality and treatment, as well as having a skilled plumber available at the school.
- Behaviour change interventions for children and teachers to promote hygiene and proper use of facilities.

Key Indicators for WASH, Education, Finance and Gender

WASH Indicators	%
Estimated urban population coverage, improved drinking water sources ¹ (2015)	100
Estimated rural population coverage, improved drinking water sources ¹ (2015)	99
Estimated urban population coverage, improved sanitation facility ¹ (2015)	97
Estimated rural population coverage, improved sanitation facility ¹ (2015)	93
Estimated water coverage in schools ² (2013)	100
Estimated sanitation coverage in schools ² (2013)	100
Education Indicators	%
Primary education attainment rate ³ (2010)	88
Total net enrolment rate, primary, both sexes ⁴ (2013)	99.29
Total net enrolment rate, lower secondary, both sexes ⁴ (2012)	98.61
Finance Indicators⁴	%
Government expenditure on education as % of GDP (2008)	3.76
Expenditure on education as % of total government expenditure (all sectors - 2008)	10.44
Aid Indicators³	US\$
Total aid to education (2012)- Egypt	136 million
Total aid to basic education (2012)- Egypt	43 million
Gender Parity Index (GPI) Indicators	Integer
Gender parity index of the primary attainment rate – poorest children ³ (2010)	0.88
Gender parity index of the primary attainment rate – richest children ³ (2010)	1.04
Total net enrolment rate, primary, gender parity index ⁴ (2013)	0.99

¹ UNICEF/WHO –Progress on sanitation and drinking water-2015; ² UNICEF- Advancing WASH in Schools Monitoring- 2015;

³ UNESCO- EFAGMR- 2015; ⁴ UNESCO- education data set- 2015

2. Methods

- **Documentation review:** A desk review of relevant national government documents, websites, Save the Children desk review responses and development partner documents and websites.
- **Key informant interviews with government and development partners:** Interviews with government officials from the General Authority on Educational Buildings (GAEB) office in Assuit Governorate, the district educational department in Abnoub and Save the Children Egypt staff.
- **School visits, comprising interviews, observation surveys, and local shop visits:** 20 (10 urban, 10 rural) Save the Children-supported government schools in Assuit Governorate's Abnoub District were part of the study. Eleven case study schools were primary schools and nine were preparatory. All primary schools were co-ed, while the preparatory schools consisted of two girls' schools, two boys' schools, and five co-ed schools. Half of the case study schools operated in two shifts, while half operated in one shift. Data was collected for the case study in the fall of 2014. The number of students in schools was between 188 and 2292, with the median school size being 590 students.



Map of Egypt highlighting Assuit where schools were visited.

All schools had been beneficiaries of Save the Children. Some schools received infrastructure support (2010-2013), while others received only WASH education and hygiene promotion assistance. Within the past year, all case study schools continue to receive educational support from Save the Children, and therefore may not be reflective of other government schools in Egypt.

Conversion rate used in the case-study was 1 EGP = 0.13947 US\$ (Source: Oanda Currency Converter, Oct 23, 2014)

3. Resource Setting for WASH in Schools

3.1 Agencies Investing in WASH facilities in Schools

The Ministry of Education (MoE) and the General Authority for Educational Buildings (GAEB) are the main agencies that invest in WASH in schools in Egypt. The MoE is decentralized to the district level, and holds a general management and supervisory role over pre-primary, primary and secondary educational institutions. The GAEB is an autonomous government agency, which is also decentralized. It does not provide funding to schools, but conducts construction and maintenance of school facilities. The Holding Company for Water and Waste Water (HCWW) provides water services to communities and schools, maintaining water stations and piped networks. Municipalities are responsible for sewerage utilities and solid waste disposal services in communities. NGOs and the private sector provide occasional support for construction and rehabilitation of facilities and encourage SMCs and student bodies to monitor and maintain their facilities.

Construction and rehabilitation

- The GAEB is responsible for setting national standards and preparing master plans for educational buildings across the country, as well as constructing and rehabilitating school infrastructure and facilities. The GAEB has a manual called "Standards and Specifications of Educational Buildings." All new educational buildings are obliged to abide by all WASH regulations as indicated by the GAEB standards. The agency is charged with conducting comprehensive periodic maintenance or refurbishments every five years at each school. The GAEB also conducts additional & new construction projects, which include building new toilets and handwashing facilities to accommodate the increase

in classrooms and student capacity at certain schools. Throughout Egypt, NGOs such as Save the Children provide support to WASH in schools, including construction and rehabilitation.

Water, waste disposal and hygiene services

- The government run Holding Company for Water and Wastewater (HCWW) and its subsidiaries own and operate the water supply systems across Egypt. The system includes water treatment plants and piped networks and wastewater treatment plants. The Egypt Water Regulatory Authority monitors and inspects the quality of water services.
- Based on a school's planned capacity, the GAEB will direct the HCWW to extend the necessary water supply into the school. Availability and water quality are determined by the overall water and sanitation status in the entire geographic area, which varies by region. The HCWW has policies and procedures for water treatment for drinking purposes. The quality of water at schools will be a reflection of the quality of water in the entire geographic area where the school is located.
- City Councils manage latrine emptying and solid waste removal and disposal as part of the waste disposal system for municipalities. The frequency and efficiency of this paid service varies significantly between locations. Schools are covered for waste collection by the Councils at a cost to schools. Private companies, and the *zaballeen* or waste collectors who collect and recycle waste for a small fee are the other waste collection options for schools.
- NGOs, such as Orphan Care and Islamic Charity, provide waste management services in some locations. NGOs also provide posters and other hygiene promotion materials to encourage good hygiene practices in schools.

Maintenance and monitoring

- Responsibility for the maintenance of water and sanitation systems within schools is shared among the school, MoE, GAEB and the HCWW depending on the type of system and level of complexity involved in maintenance. Each school is expected to conduct simple maintenance, including minor repairs of WASH facilities as needed. Schools have a maintenance person to look into all maintenance

needs of the school, but they often lack training and experience in WASH.

- The MoE drafts an annual plan to conduct annual maintenance at certain schools, giving priority to schools most in need. The MoE also carries out urgent maintenance to address immediate school maintenance needs. This work is managed through the MoE district offices.
- Apart from comprehensive periodic maintenance, the GAEB provides emergency maintenance in case of big problems that can't be managed through the MoE maintenance plans. For water systems, schools may contact the HCWW to address insufficient water quantity or poor quality.
- The education management information system (EMIS) collects data on the GAEB indicators that measure the number of WASH facilities at each school, but no indicators exist for monitoring functionality of facilities. Similarly, no standard reporting mechanisms exist for monitoring hygienic practices at schools. Schools can note WASH O&M issues on their monthly reports to district education offices. The new decentralization maintenance plan gives more flexibility to schools to meet their routine monitoring and maintenance needs. However, schools are constrained by a shortage of janitors to meet their needs.

3.2 Policies and Plans for WASH in Schools

The GAEB is the main governmental body responsible for setting standards for schools in Egypt. Established by Presidential Decree No. 448 in 1988, the GAEB has a manual called "*Standards and Specifications of Educational buildings*", which includes WASH regulations that all new educational buildings are obliged to follow (see Box 1 below). The MoE also has general maintenance policies pertaining to schools, but specific WASH standards are not included. In 2014, the MoE released the *Strategic Plan for Pre-University Education, 2014-2030*, and although strengthening school infrastructure is one of the three main priorities, O&M of school WASH facilities does not explicitly feature in the plan. There is, however, mention of expanding on an associated intervention – school feeding.

Box 1: Excerpts of School WASH Standards from the GAEB Manual

Sanitation facilities

- One toilet per 30 female students.
- One toilet and one urinal per 40 male students.
- There are separate toilets for girls & boys.
- There should be a bathroom for children with disabilities and another one for kindergarten children.
- There should be toilets for teachers & administrative staff (number or ratio not identified).

Water and Hygiene facilities

- One handwashing/drinking facility per 30 students (a facility is defined as a unit with several taps).

3.3 Financial Allocations for O&M of WASH Facilities in Primary and Preparatory Schools

In Egypt, the Ministry of Finance allocates funds for educational institutions through the two channels of the GAEB and the MoE. The GAEB provides construction, rehabilitation and maintenance services to schools based on its plans, but does not transfer any funds to schools. The national GAEB budget received from the MoF in recent years could not be determined, but the GAEB budget (covers construction and repairs) for Assuit governorate was 6,834,030 EGP (\$976,290) in 2014. However, based on published records, implementation rates of the GAEB budget fell to as low as 60% in fiscal year 2012/2013, which indicates less construction and rehabilitation of facilities in recent years (MoE 2014).

After receiving funds, the MoE transfers funds to education directorates in Governorates, which then disburse funds to government schools. Following its fiscal decentralization plan of 2010/2011, 50% of the MoE transferred funds go to the district education department for annual and emergency maintenance, while the remaining 50% (also called the 'school decentralization maintenance budget') go to schools in the district for simple maintenance. This system has helped schools and local governments meet maintenance needs with less bureaucracy. The maintenance budget covers all types of maintenance and repairs at schools, such as WASH facilities, electrical maintenance, playground maintenance, school buildings and furniture. There is no specific allocation amount for WASH.

For the fiscal years 2010/2011, 2011/2012 and 2012/2013, an annual allocation of 210 million EGP (29.2 million US\$) was dedicated to general school maintenance for pre-university education across the country. Of this, 105 million EGP went to the district education department to meet the needs of major maintenance in schools within their geographic reach, while 105 million EGP was received by all schools for simple maintenance. Each school receives allocations based on the following equation:

50 EGP (6.97 US\$) per classroom + a variable factor * number of students/school.

The variable factor (usually 4-6 EGP per student) is calculated for each governorate and includes consideration factors such as enrollment rates, poverty index and human development index. Based on data received from 20 case-study schools, for a median school with 590 students, the annual simple maintenance budget is 3,105 EGP (433 US\$) per school or about 6.15 EGP (0.86 US\$) per student. Information on the median amount of investment per school by district education departments for annual or urgent maintenance could not be retrieved from authorities.

The maintenance budget does not include the salaries of maintenance staff. That is covered through the MoE's wages line item (see table 1 below). However, the wages line item does not cover salaries for janitors. Janitors are managed by schools through individual contracts, for which they rely on other sources of income such as cash contributions from SMC members and parents. Other contributions from the school community include labor and materials.

Overall, although maintenance budgets have remained similar over the years, financial allocations and expenditures for pre-university education (including primary, preparatory and secondary education) have grown over the years (48,431 million EGP in 2012/2013) due to inflation and because of wage increases. Wages constitute between 85 to 88% of total

financial allocations (MoE 2014). This consequently means that budgets for maintenance relative to inflation and other line items have decreased over the years. Governorate and district level governments do not have independent revenue streams and rely solely on national funds for schools.

Table 1. Financial Accounts for Pre-University Education

Budget Account	2012/2013, in million EGP
Wages	42,812
Goods and Services (for maintenance, water and electricity utilities)	3,359
Interests	22
Support and Donations	59
Other Expenditures	131.3
Investments (buying non-financial assets)	2,048
Total	48,431.3

4. Situation In Schools

4.1 School Resources and Systems for O&M of WASH Facilities

All schools reported having resources and systems to support the O&M of their WASH facilities, which varied between schools. All schools have annual maintenance plans and receive a maintenance budget for school infrastructure, including WASH facilities. The budget does not include a separate line item for WASH, and seven schools recommended increasing the maintenance budget to address WASH needs. Only two schools reported preparing budgets with a line item for WASH. The plans and budgets are managed by SMCs and overseen by their Board of Trustees. However, only eight schools noted that their SMCs actively support WASH. Full time maintenance staff are present in all schools to tend to simple repairs; however, there are challenges with the quality of the maintenance staff. Three schools proactively recommended the need for a skilled plumber. All schools reported having janitors at some point to help with cleaning facilities and waste disposal, but there are challenges funding these positions. There are delays and bottlenecks when it comes to bigger repairs from higher authorities. Four schools proactively recommended the need for regular follow up by government authorities, and an additional two schools recommended regular inspection of water quality. At all 20 case study schools, Save the Children supports some WASH O&M.

- All 20 schools reported having an annual maintenance plan that includes the overall maintenance requirements of the school. This is sent to the district education department at the beginning of the school year for approval. All 20 schools also reported having responsibilities for managing simple repairs as defined by the MoE maintenance levels
- All schools reported receiving the school decentralization maintenance budget from the MoE to cover all maintenance and repairs including WASH. The allocation did not contain a separate line item for WASH, and in seven schools, key informants proactively mentioned the need to increase the maintenance budget for schools. Only two of the 20 schools noted preparing a school budget that had line items for water, toilets and handwashing facilities, which was submitted to their district education department for funding. Ten of the 20 schools also report their spending on WASH, mostly to the district education department on a monthly basis.
- All case study schools have a Board of Trustees, which is elected by MoE decree. These boards are composed of eight elected parents and teachers, as well as the school principal and social worker. The BoT has a wide range of responsibilities including approving and supervising the execution of school maintenance plans and maintaining ties with the

community, the municipality and the MoE. All case study schools also reported having an SMC. SMCs are appointed and comprise school staff who are responsible for identifying maintenance needs, developing maintenance plans, implementing ministerial decrees and monitoring teachers. SMCs were reportedly trained by the district education department at least once every year. However, only eight of 20 schools reported that their SMCs and BoTs actively support WASH. In these schools, SMCs support WASH by regularly monitoring facilities, raising funds from community members to provide labor, soap and other supplies and assisting in budget management and other trainings. Contributions are generally small and irregular, and therefore are not documented. BoTs that support WASH work closely with their local government and the SMC to solve WASH problems in their schools.

- All schools reported having a maintenance member responsible for ensuring simple maintenance of water systems and handwashing stations. The maintenance staff are usually graduates of vocational schools and have little experience. Maintenance typically took place monthly or less frequently, and measures such as water treatment did not take place. Eleven schools noted that they reported insufficient or brackish water in their commonly used water points to the district or municipal offices and the HCWW; however, no action had been taken. None of the schools reported specific budgets for water system maintenance or soap and cleaning materials other than the school maintenance budget.
- All 20 schools reported that a school janitor was responsible for cleaning toilet facilities; however, only 11 schools could provide cost information on their janitor. This may be reflective of the fact that schools are now hiring janitors as contract staff depending on SMC contributions, and therefore, positions are sometimes vacant. In schools that have a janitor, the janitor is overworked and often lacks the training and experience to carry out WASH O&M. Seven schools noted that they had reported problems in their most commonly used toilets to their district education department, and five had been waiting for action for over a month.
- While eight of the schools had local hardware shops within two kilometres of the school, for nine

schools, the local hardware shop was between 6 and 20 kilometres. Eighteen of the 20 schools reported that a teacher was responsible for purchasing supplies and that the median monthly travel time for the purchase of supplies was three hours. Visits to the shops confirmed that they were stocked with water treatment (chlorine, PUR, water container), handwashing (soap, tissue paper), cleaning (detergents, mops, scrubber, broom) and repair (elbow pipe, downpipe, cement, sand mortar, taps, toilet flush, door latch, door hinge, iron sheeting, vent screen, vent pipe) supplies.

- Nine schools reported that their janitor burned school waste on or near their school compound. Six schools reported that the municipality collects waste three times each week, while the remaining five schools reported that a charity provides waste disposal services three times each week for a small fee. Schools did not have a special budget for waste disposal.
- All schools reported that the school social worker or a school nurse led hygiene education activities in the past year. However, none reported budgets or costs for these activities. Materials such as booklets and IEC materials were available

All 20 schools reported having student led organizations, but none were involved in WASH O&M. Instead these organizations were all extra-curricular or sports based organizations.

4.2 WASH Costs

District records, school plans and expense records could not be inspected during the study. WASH related expenses were mainly quoted by school authorities and these were treated as estimated costs per year, presented as median values in Table 2. The costs since provided by school authorities as school decentralization maintenance funds are considered as simple maintenance costs and do not include an analysis of the annual or emergency maintenance costs that are managed by the district education department.

Schools confirmed that they do not receive dedicated funding for school WASH O&M, and if a school must conduct WASH maintenance, the funding comes from the school decentralization maintenance budget. The school median maintenance budget is 3,105 EGP (433 US\$) per school per year. This amount may, however, allow for limited WASH maintenance in a school

needing pipe, faucet or drainage repairs, in addition to the purchase of toilet cleaning materials and supplies. This may explain why only five schools reported purchasing soap and cleaning detergents for handwashing or why only three schools invested in posters (IEC materials) for hygiene promotion. Together, these median costs of small repairs, toilet cleaning materials, handwashing materials and posters are 1,613 EGP (225 US\$) per school per year or 52% of the median maintenance budget, making it expensive for schools. School size in these costs (table 2) is assumed

to be the median size of 590 students.

The cost of a janitor is the largest expense, with a median cost of 15,000 EGP (2,092US\$) per school per year. Although all schools reported having a janitor, since the position is not covered by staff wages, the number of schools that were able to afford a full-time janitor is difficult to determine. Payments rely on SMC contributions.

Table 2. Median Costs of WASH Items Reported During Interviews with School Authorities

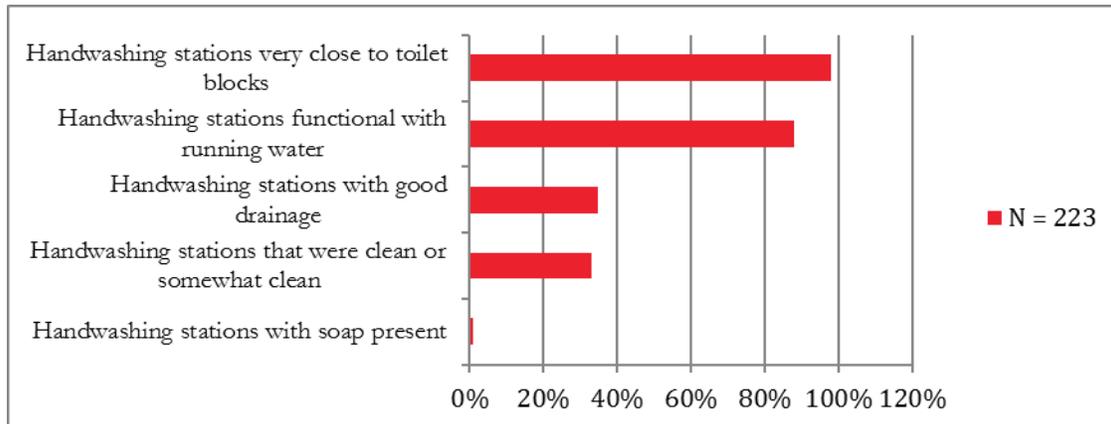
School WASH item	No. of Schools	Median Cost EGP (US\$)/ student/year	Median Cost EGP (US\$)/ school/year*
Handwashing materials (soap, cleaning detergent, cleaning brushes, towels)	5	0.44 (0.06)	360 (50)
Handwashing O&M (repair of faucets, drainage)	10	1.04 (0.14)	565 (79)
Toilet cleaning materials (disinfectants, mops, brushes and acid)	14	0.59 (0.08)	300 (42)
Hygiene education (posters, IEC materials)	3	0.37 (0.05)	388 (54)
Solid Waste disposal (burning, waste disposal utility service)	5	0.44 (0.06)	360 (50)
Janitor	11	20.97 (2.83)	15,000 (2,092)

4.3 Condition of WASH facilities

WASH conditions across urban and rural settings were found to be homogeneous. Schools operating in one shift had very similar WASH conditions when compared to those operating in two shifts. All the schools had running water and overall, around 86% of toilet facilities were fully functional. However, cleanliness of handwashing and toilet facilities was a problem. All 20 schools had trash and food waste and waste paper clearly visible on school grounds. Only one school had soap present. Despite the presence of water at every school on the day of visit, school officials reported inconsistent water supply due to a lack of water in the area and due to brackish ground water. Three schools recommended renovation of their water or sewage facility.

- All schools had running water from a piped system used for drinking and handwashing purposes. In 18 of the 20 schools the system was functional, while in two it was partially functional on the day of the visit. In the 20 schools, of the 223 handwashing stations/taps visited, 219 (98%) were either inside or very close to toilet blocks. 197 (88%) handwashing stations/ taps were functional (i.e. with running water), although only 78 (35%) were found to have good drainage and 74 (33%) were found to be clean or somewhat clean. Only two (1%) stations had soap present, and none of the schools had a posted schedule for cleaning the handwashing stations.
- The median number of handwashing stations/taps per school was 10 (range, 3-28). The median number of toilets per school was 12 (range, 6-51).

Figure I. Status of Handwashing Stations



- All 20 schools had pit latrines with slabs, and in 19 of them there was a water supply used for flushing. None of the toilets had a posted schedule for cleaning. The majority of the 365 toilets surveyed (out of a total of 370) were found to be functional, including those exclusively for girls (84% of 88) and for boys (77% of 172). However, in eight of the 20 schools there were unclean students' toilets. In five schools, there were clean toilets and in seven schools there were somewhat clean students' toilets. Some of the other problems were that toilets lacked privacy, either because separators between stalls were not high enough or doors didn't lock from inside. None of the schools provided facilities (e.g. showers or disposal of pads) for menstruating girls.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Egypt has an institutional and financing mechanism to support the construction and maintenance of WASH facilities. The MoE, GAEB, the HCWW, city councils, NGOs and the private sector are involved in providing facilities and services for water, sanitation, hygiene and cleanliness of schools. There are three levels of maintenance for schools, backed by funding allocations and plans at each level. These include simple repairs that can be done at the level of the school, annual or urgent repairs that can be implemented by the district education departments and refurbishments or emergency repairs that can be done by the GAEB. In addition, the HCWW has some maintenance responsibilities towards schools. A maintenance person, and in some cases a janitor, is a salaried staff member of the school, and the overall student to toilet ratio is 45:1.

Despite these good practices, there are challenges when it comes to the simple and longer term periodic

maintenance of WASH facilities in schools. Although government budgets and expenditures have grown in the past few years due to increases in wages and inflation, maintenance budgets for schools and district education department have remained the same. This has meant a relative reduction in the allocations for school maintenance. The GAEB spending rate has also been found to be as low as 60% in the past few years. One of the three priorities in the 2014-2030 education strategic plan is strengthening school infrastructure, but this does not include maintenance of WASH facilities. While a process for schools to request and receive maintenance support through the MoE and GAEB exists, these systems do not always function as intended. Government offices do not regularly respond to reports of facility damages or consistently train and support schools to maintain their facilities.

Since maintenance budgets do not have a specific line item for WASH, spending on WASH is up to the discretion of schools. Only two of the 20 schools visited had developed a school budget with a WASH line item. The maintenance person is often unskilled to perform the WASH maintenance needed in schools, and one janitor is generally unable to meet the cleaning needs of over 10 toilets and handwashing stations in schools. Consequently, the findings from visits to schools show that while water and toilet facilities are functional, the school ground and facilities are usually unclean or only somewhat clean. Schools rely on local solutions and NGO support to fill funding and service gaps. Some informants reported that the government auditing system creates hesitation to spend available school maintenance funds for legitimate school O&M issues. Most schools visited did not have WASH supplies (soap, sanitary pads, etc.).

Recommendations made by key informants and Save the Children staff to improve the O&M of WASH facilities in Egyptian schools were as follows:

- Improve coordination among all involved governmental bodies (GAEB, MoE and HCWW) to ensure timely annual, urgent, emergency maintenance, as well as refurbishments.
 - Regular inspection and follow-up of school facilities by the BOT and district authorities, as well as fund-raising for school facilities improvement by BOTs.
- Increase the decentralization maintenance budget to schools, and include a line item for WASH to ensure that the funds are used for upkeep of toilets and handwashing stations. Within this budget keep allocation for menstrual hygiene supplies.
 - Improvement to the toilet and running water systems, such as through regular inspection of water quality and treatment, as well as by having a skilled plumber available at the school. Ensure that facilities are disable friendly, private and gender segregated.

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