

Mural Exhibition as a Promotive Strategy to Proper Hygiene and Sanitation Practices among Children: A Case Study from Urban Slum Schools in Nairobi, Kenya

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Abstract : Background: Provision of adequate levels of water, sanitation, and hygiene in schools is a strategic objective in achieving universal primary education among children in low and middle-income countries. However, lack of proper sanitation and hygiene practices in schools, especially those in informal settlement has resulted to an increased rate of school absenteeism thereby affecting the education and health outcomes of the children in those setting. Intervention or Response: Catholic Relief Services in Kenya supports five schools in informal settlements of Nairobi by painting of key hygiene messages on school walls to promote proper hygiene and sanitation practices among the school children. The mural exhibitions depict the essence of proper hygiene practices, proper latrine use, and hand washing after visiting the latrine. The artwork is context specific and its aimed at improving the uptake of proper hygiene and sanitation practices among the school children. Review of project related documents was conducted including interviews with the school children. Thematic analysis was used to interpret the qualitative information generated. Results and Lessons Learnt: 12 school children have interviewed on proper hygiene and sanitation practices and the exercise revealed that painted murals were the best communication platforms for creating awareness on proper sanitation on issues relating to water, sanitation, and hygiene in schools. The painting mural provided a strong knowledge base for the formation of healthy habits in both the school and informal settlement. In addition, these sanitation messages on the school walls empower the children to share these practices with their siblings, parents, and other family members thereby acting as agents of change to proper hygiene and sanitation in those informal settlements. The findings revealed that by adopting proper sanitation and hygiene practices, there has been a reduction of school absenteeism due to a decrease in disease related to inadequate sanitation and hygiene in schools. Conclusion: The adoption of proper sanitation in schools entails more than just a painted mural wall. Insights revealed that to have a lasting sanitation and hygiene intervention, there is a need to invest in effective hygiene educational programming that encourages the formation of proper hygiene habits and promotes changes in behavior.

Keywords : education outcomes, informal settlement, mural exhibition, school hygiene and sanitation

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