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3rd and 4th grade students at a school in Khuroson District wash their hands with soap and water. Photo credit: Chris Martin.

Operation and Maintenance Financing for School WASH Facilities in Tajikistan

2015

Acknowledgements

This brief is based on a 2014 global study by Save the Children and UNICEF on the Operation and Maintenance Financing of WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) facilities in schools. The study was coordinated by Susan Davis, with assistance from Seung Lee, Mohini Venkatesh, and Stephen Sara at Save the Children USA; and Murat Sahin and Greg Keast from UNICEF.

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

Special thanks to the following contributors from Tajikistan: officials from the National Ministry of Education, the Khatlon Provincial Educational Department and the Jomi District Education Department, as well as school officials from 10 government secondary schools in five rural districts of Khatlon province. We are also very grateful to Saodat Sangova, and Farogat Mirzoeva from Save the Children Tajikistan for overseeing the data collection for the case-study and reviewing the brief.

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October 2015

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Tajikistan

The Republic of Tajikistan is a country in Central Asia with a land area of 143,100 km² and population of 8.4 million people (population density – 60 per km²). It is a low/middle income country (GDP – 9.2 billion US\$, GDP per capita 1,099 US\$ and GNI per capita 1,060 US\$) (World Bank, 2014).

The country is divided into the four administrative provinces (*viloyat*) of Sughd, Khatlon, the autonomous province of Gorno-Badakhshan (GBO) and the Region of Republican Subordination. Each province is divided into districts or municipalities in cities, each with its own administrative office (*Kbukumat*). These districts are subdivided into *jamoats*, which are village or town level self-governing units. As of 2006, there were 58 districts and 367 *jamoats* in Tajikistan.

In Tajikistan, general education lasts for 11 years, comprising four years of primary education, five years of general basic education, and two years of general secondary education. The education sector is currently undergoing reforms to expand general education to 12 years of education. Pre-school education has low coverage, reaching only 10% of pre-school age children. The education budget increased as a percentage of GDP to 4.02% in 2012, but this is still insufficient to meet education system needs (World Bank, 2015). Municipal WASH service provision in rural areas is low, as is WASH coverage in schools.

I. Executive Summary

In Tajikistan, the government invests in WASH in schools mainly through its Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), its Ministry of Water Resources and Land Reclamation (MoWRLR), the State Unitary Enterprise, “*Khojagii manziliyukommunali*” (SUE KMK), which supports construction and rehabilitation, and its Ministry of Health (MoH), which supports monitoring of water quality and waste management. These agencies implement WASH construction, rehabilitation, service delivery and monitoring in schools through their local district administrative counterparts and associated companies. In addition to State establishments, development partners including NGOs, the

private sector and parent teacher associations (PTAs) also invest in WASH in schools.

Good Practices: Since the civil war that ended in 1997, Tajikistan has made progress in re-establishing its education system and setting aside resources for the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of WASH facilities in schools. The MoES’s National Strategy for Education Development (NSED), 2012- 2020, has prioritized the construction and rehabilitation of schools, as well as improving the electricity, water supply, sewage, meal and medical services in schools, particularly those in rural areas. To support this work, the MoES strategy also recommends that schools access funding from public-private partnerships and other State enterprises. This strategy, along with policies from the MoWRLR for construction standards, as well as policies from the MoH for water quality and waste disposal, sets the stage for O&M of WASH facilities in schools. Since its introduction in 2005 and wide scale implementation in 2010, the per-capita financing system used by the MoES has improved overall funding for schools, spending and tracking of expenditures. Budgets for schools, which increased from 555 TJS (109.5 US\$) to 700 TJS (138.16 US\$) per student per year in the recent past, cover salaries, services and purchases. These expenses could include electricity, water and waste disposal utilities, WASH supplies, cleaner salaries, and repair of WASH facilities, however, the amount or percent-allocation for WASH is not known. All of the rural schools visited were found to have a government-paid cleaner, as well as a logistics person responsible for the purchase of school supplies. In schools with development partner support, PTAs and school student bodies play a role in O&M of WASH facilities, as well as in hygiene promotion.

Areas for Improvement: Although schools plan annual budgets, they are not broken down to include line items on maintenance or WASH. As a result, spending on WASH depends on each school’s discretion and priorities. Interviews with schools elicited only a few responses on budgets and costs for WASH O&M, which indicated that needs were not being met. Also, schools generally had only partially functional or clean WASH facilities and mostly lacked soap. Given their rural locations, local governments provided limited WASH services to schools, leaving schools to rely on local solutions for water supply, toilet

maintenance and waste disposal. Water supply was intermittent in schools purchasing tanker-water, indicating limited funds after teacher and staff salaries and other essentials were paid. The processes for fund requisition and management seem complicated for schools, showing a need for training in accounting and financial management. Although there is a system for monitoring and reporting on school WASH, it can be strengthened.

Recommendations made by key informants to improve the O&M of WASH facilities in schools in Tajikistan were as follows. These need to be discussed with all stakeholders in Tajikistan in order to plan next steps.

- Strengthen the capacity and role of stakeholders in schools and local governments to monitor and manage facilities.
- Increase national technical support for WASH in schools through additional human resources.

- Calculate new costs per student that incorporate maintenance of WASH facilities in schools.
- Accelerate fundraising for WASH in schools, both through education and WASH sector proposals, and increase school spending on WASH O&M.
- Improve the financial management systems at all levels (central, district, school) and provide greater autonomy to schools to apply and use per-capita funding for its WASH needs.

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 (see references for a detailed list).

Box I. Key Indicators for WASH, Education, Finance and Gender

WASH Indicators	Percentage
Estimated urban population coverage, improved drinking water sources ¹ (2015)	93
Estimated rural population coverage, improved drinking water sources ¹ (2015)	67
Estimated urban population coverage, improved sanitation facility ¹ (2015)	94
Estimated rural population coverage, improved sanitation facility ¹ (2015)	95
Estimated water coverage in schools ² (2013)	51
Estimated sanitation coverage in schools ² (2013)	29
Education Indicators	Percentage
Primary education attainment rate ³ (2010)	95
Total net enrolment rate, primary, both sexes ⁴ (2014)	95.62
Finance Indicators⁴	Percentage
Government expenditure on education as % of GDP (2012)	4.02
Expenditure on education as % of total government expenditure (2012)	16.35
Aid Indicators³	US\$
Total aid to education (2012)- Tajikistan	30 million
Total aid to basic education (2012)- Tajikistan	17 million
Gender Parity Index (GPI) Indicators	Integer
Gender parity index of the primary attainment rate – poorest children ³ (2010)	0.96
Gender parity index of the primary attainment rate – richest children ³ (2010)	0.98
Total net enrolment rate, primary, gender parity index ⁴ (2014)	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

- **Key informant interviews with government and development partners:** This included government officials from the National Ministry of Education, the Khatlon Provincial Educational Department and the Jomi District Education Department, as well as Save the Children Tajikistan staff.
- **School visits comprising interviews, observation surveys and local shop visits:** Interviews and observation surveys took place in 10 government secondary schools (from grade 1-11) in five rural districts of Khatlon province¹ in Southwest Tajikistan (see map). Data was collected in late 2014. All schools were double-shift schools, with school sizes varying from 122 to 1553 students, the median school size being 620.

Five of the schools had been supported by an INGO (Save the Children) between 2011 and 2013 with improvements in water and sanitation facilities and hygiene and life skills education. The INGO support also included facilitating the development of hygiene improvement plans by PTAs, provision of a maximum of 1,200 US\$ per school that was matched by the same amount of funds raised by PTA from communities, water purifier (PUR²) and soap distribution, teacher and PTA training, child participation and community mobilization and outreach.

Conversion rate used in the study: 1 TJS = 0.19737 US\$ (Source: Oanda, Nov 12, 2014).

3. Resource Setting for WASH in Schools

3.1 Agencies Investing in WASH facilities in Primary Schools

Municipal water and sanitation across Tajikistan needs substantial rehabilitation, and the World Bank and government have ongoing projects to improve WASH investments, infrastructure and services (World Bank, 2015). The MoES, along with the MoWRLR, the SUE KMK – a government holding company on public utilities – and the MoH are the central agencies investing in WASH in schools. The local government and its companies have responsibilities for implementation of school WASH

¹ Bokhtar, Sarband, Khuroson, Jilikul and A. Jomi District

² A water treatment powder from Proctor and Gamble



Map of Tajikistan highlighting Khatlon where schools were visited.

construction, services, maintenance and monitoring. In addition, international donors and development agencies, as well as the school's PTA, invest in WASH in schools.

Construction and rehabilitation

- Under the MoWRLR, the Department on Construction, Design and Exploitation (DCDEDW) is responsible for rural water supply systems. After the DCDEDW, the SUE KMK is the next biggest provider of potable water, and it also manages sewage and solid waste management (Save the Children, UNICEF, 2014). These agencies work with the district and municipal MoES for construction and rehabilitation of school WASH facilities.
- The MoES is responsible for construction of schools, including its water points, handwashing facilities and toilets. When a new school needs construction, the MoES passes the funds and responsibility for implementation to the education office in the local government at the municipality or district. The local government decides on the type of WASH facility, and it is constructed by local contractors. Depending on its location, a school may receive piped water (common in big cities), tube well, water tanks for rain or spring water or tankered water. For sanitation, the practice is to construct pour-flush latrines or pit latrines in mountainous districts with a low water table.
- Many donors and development agencies support the construction and rehabilitation of WASH facilities in

schools and communities. These include the World Bank, GIZ and KfW (German Development Bank), UNICEF and NGOs such as Save the Children, Oxfam, Mercy Corps, CESVI, COOPI and ACTED. UNICEF has supported WASH in schools since 2002, reaching an estimated 10% of the schools in the country (UNICEF).

Water, waste disposal and hygiene services

- In areas where the DCDEDW is responsible for infrastructure, the local municipal administration (*Khukumats*) and their water companies have operational responsibilities for water delivery. In cities and districts where the SUE KMK is responsible for infrastructure, local water companies have contracts with the SUE KMK to operate services. Where schools have piped water supply, they pay for water utilities on a monthly basis.
- Depending on the city or district, the emptying of pits in schools, as well as solid waste collection and disposal, is done by municipal administration and their delegated department or public company, or by the local company of the SUE KMK. Schools have to pay for this service, so in many cases, due to financial constraints, schools end up burning or burying their waste.
- Schools do not receive regular hygiene supplies of free soap, menstrual pads or cleaning materials (detergents, disinfectants, brooms etc.). Schools need to budget for these supplies in their annual plan; however, this depends on individual school's prioritization.

Maintenance and Monitoring

- Depending on the municipality/district, the local administration or the SUE KMK provides WASH maintenance support service to schools. Some district officials in Khatlon province confirmed paying for the maintenance of water systems and handwashing facilities in schools. Each school has a government-paid cleaner and is responsible for cleaning latrines on a daily basis.
- In NGO supported schools, parents, teachers and community members play a role in supporting WASH O&M in schools. PTAs conduct meetings with community members then determine the repairs needed for the school and collect money, as well as provide in

kind support. Funding varies each year and for each school.

- At the national level, the MoH's Sanitary Epidemiological Department sets standards and coordinates the monitoring and enforcement of drinking water quality and waste treatment within supply companies. In the municipal/district administration, the Sanitation and Epidemiological Center monitors schools for drinking water quality and sanitary compliance and monitors municipal waste collection and disposal. However, the Center does not monitor the facilities as often as is required (Save the Children, UNICEF, 2014).
- The MoES also has a national Education Management Information System (EMIS) that collects school data annually; however, there is a need to improve the efficiency and management of this system (GRT, 2012). With UNICEF support, some WASH information on type of water facility, functionality, treatment and latrine numbers were added to the EMIS in 2011. Information on toilet functionality, cleanliness, soap presence and hygiene promotion is missing (Save the Children, UNICEF, 2014).

3.2 Policies and Plans for WASH in Schools

- The key responsibility for national policy and planning in the water sector rests with the MoWRLR. The Architecture and Construction Committee provides technical policy advice for the design and construction of water supply and sewage systems according to local rules and contracts, then regulates projects. The MoH's Sanitary Epidemiological Department develops standards related to water quality and waste treatment requirements.
- The MoES has also prioritized the construction and rehabilitation of schools and pre-schools in its National Strategy for Education Development (NSED), 2012-2020, to address the poor condition of schools following Tajikistan's history of civil war and the education reform process for 12 years of education. This includes improving the electricity, water supply, sewage, meals and medical services in schools, particularly those in rural areas (GRT, 2012). UNICEF is providing technical support and is advocating for the inclusion of WASH and hygiene education in schools as one of the priority areas in the strategy.

- Between 2010 and 2013, the MoES developed guidelines on recommended national standards for WASH in schools with the technical support of UNICEF. The guidelines were presented to members from various government agencies and development partners; however, at the time of this study, the guidelines were still in draft form and had not been adopted by the government. The standards recommend specific measures for the management of WASH in schools at national, district and school level (MoES, 2013).
- The MoES is currently revising its curriculum for the shift to 12 years of education and intends to include hygiene education as one of the key topics for the ‘class hours’ within its existing national program on healthy lifestyles (GRT, 2012).



Murodjon Saidkhojaev, 12, teaches his sister Zainura, 6, how to wash her hands. He learned about hygiene in a Child to Child group in his school in the Khatlon Region. Photo Credit: Michael Bisceglie.

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

In Tajikistan, the State budget is the main funding source for education, and the Ministry of Finance (MoF) is responsible for determining school budgets. Typically, all schools, which may include schools’ PTA or parent councils (PC), prepare a fund request before each school year (in December). This request is submitted to the district financial department, which in turn reports to the regional MoES and MoF. The MoF provides the designated funds to the district finance department, which disperses funds to individual schools (see Box 2 below).

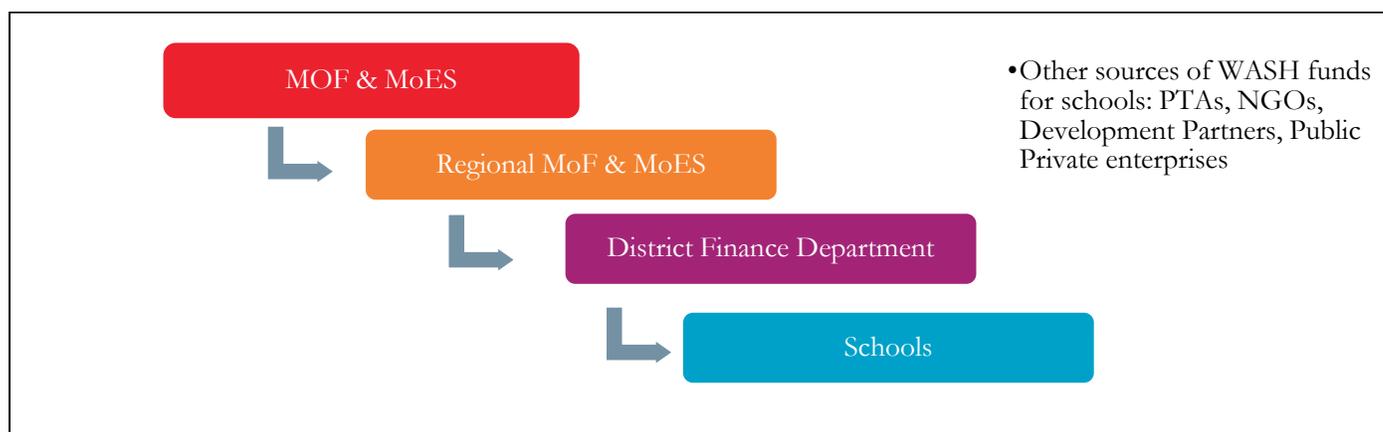
The main model of education financing is the per capita financing (PCF) system, introduced by the World Bank-Global Partnership for Education in 2005 in an effort to achieve equitable public fund allocation between regions, decentralized management and increasing autonomy of schools. The national PCF allocation for schools is comprised of two parts: a base rate for general education at primary (grade 1-4), basic (1-9) and secondary (10-11) level and an additional per student coefficient for remote, multi-

language, vocational schools and schools with branches. In 2005, the PCF amount was about 555 TJS (109.5 US\$) per student per year, which in recent years has been increased to 700 TJS (138.16 US\$) per student per year (Save the Children, UNICEF, 2014). It includes a salaries line item, which would cover salaries for cleaners and services and purchase line items to cover utility expenses (water bills), supplies and renovation of WASH facilities. Without a dedicated budget line for WASH, it is difficult to ascertain how much is allocated for O&M of facilities. However, if it is assumed³ that 85% of funds go towards teacher and support staff salaries, then the amount remaining for school stationary, utilities and maintenance is 105 TJS (20.7 US\$) per student per year, or 65,100 TJS (12,849 US\$) per year for a school of 620 children. Depending on schools’ other priorities, a fraction of this amount would be available for WASH O&M.

The PCF system has reportedly increased overall funding for schools, improved spending on repairs and maintenance and improved tracking of expenditures and school performance (Save the Children Tajikistan, 2014). The system requires using funds primarily through bank transfers in order to provide appropriate financial and procurement reports to the government. However, the procedure of ordering and receiving funds, reallocating savings, reviewing data and cashless transactions is complicated for schools, indicating a need for training in management and accounting.

Given the need for additional financial resources, the NSED recommends a few other means of investment in educational institutions. These include multi-channel financing to include public-private funding. It also includes a State order for personnel training in educational institutions and stimulating enterprises in the private sector to support education (GRT, 2012). The PTA/PC is considered part of the private sector. The main gap in multi-channel financing systems is the lack of investment. The funds depend on the activeness of parents, private sector, and government and non-government stakeholders.

Box 2. Main Channel of Funding for Education and WASH in Schools



4. Situation in Schools

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

All schools reported preparing an annual budget, but did not mention a line for general maintenance or WASH. All schools also reported having a school cleaner responsible for cleaning school facilities and for waste disposal. The NGO-supported schools had school hygiene improvement plans, a PTA/PC and a child-led organization that played a role in managing WASH facilities, as well as in hygiene promotion. These were generally not found in non-supported schools.

- All five MOE and NGO-supported schools reported having school hygiene improvement plans. None of the non-supported schools reported having school hygiene

improvement plans.

- All schools reported that the school principal, school accountant, and the PTA/PC members annually prepare the budget for the school, which is submitted to the district Education Department. None of the schools reported having a general maintenance or WASH budget for the school.
- All 10 schools had a PTA/PC. In the five NGO-supported schools, this body played a role in supporting WASH in schools. The PTA role involved including WASH in their annual plan, organising village sanitation days and other WASH events, and providing supplies and repairing facilities (such as broken taps). The PTAs in these schools were also trained by the NGO once or twice each year.

³ Rough estimate based on the percentage of ministry of education allocations to staff salaries in other countries

- All schools reported that the Sanitation and Epidemiological Center and the Education Department regularly visit the schools for monitoring and assessment.
- Nine schools reported they had experienced problems with their water and handwashing facilities. In five of them (all NGO supported), these problems were addressed by the PTA/PC by changing taps and painting pipes. Only supported schools reported their water and handwashing facilities were working well and the water quality was acceptable for drinking.
- All schools had pit latrines, which were cleaned by the government paid school cleaner. However, only the five supported schools that were satisfied with their commonly used toilet provided cost information on the O&M of toilet facilities. In the five NGO-supported schools, the NGO and the PTA/PC supported repairs (renovation of latrines, changing locks, repairing windows, painting etc).
- The school cleaner is responsible for waste disposal in all schools. Aside from one supported school where the waste was gathered by a collector, all schools reported burning or burying their waste.
- All schools reported that the school logistics manager is responsible for the purchase of school supplies; however, only supported schools and one non-supported school reported purchasing cleaning materials for toilets. The median distance to the nearest shop was 16 km and the reported monthly travel time for purchase of supplies was 2-3 hours. Only two shops were visited during the study, and cost data was collected on handwashing (soap, tissue paper), cleaning (broom) and repair (elbow pipe, downpipe, cement, sand mortar, tap, door latch, door hinge, iron sheeting, vent screen and vent pipe) supplies. Amounts of each product in stock and availability of water treatment materials was not reported.
- Hygiene promotion and education took place in all five NGO-supported schools. Brochures, posters, banners and modules were used in schools, as well as during events such as global oral health and handwashing day.
- All schools reported that as part of the national government structure, they had a student union, *Sozmoni Talabagi*, with all students as registered members reporting to the head teacher and school director. Additionally, the five NGO-supported schools reported having a child led organisation (CLO), which has a role in WASH in schools. This role included a close collaboration with PTA/PC members, providing them with support for activities such as collecting money for WASH O&M, organizing meetings and inviting community members to the meetings. CLOs plan monthly WASH activities, which include exhibitions, role plays, monthly school cleaning day and sharing health messages, poems and riddles during daily school assembly, as well as supported events.

4.2 School WASH O&M Costs

Municipal or district records, school plans and expense records as well as PTA books were not accessible during the study. Therefore, the study determined median costs per student and per school per year from interviewees who reported costs (see Table 1). Few costs were reported, as the costs for water O&M, soap procurement and hygiene promotion were not provided. The latter two items were paid for by Save the Children⁴ and the PTA in supported schools.

As shown in Table 1, the cost of a cleaner is the highest. School authorities noted that expenses on O&M of school WASH facilities depends on the school's other problems and expenses, and that major renovations take place during the summer, after the budget is planned and approved in accordance with MoES and MOF regulations. Authorities mentioned that WASH facilities require maintenance work 2-3 times per quarter, and depending on the type of repair work, approximately 304 TJS (60 US\$) is needed (Save the Children, 2014). This could mean an expense of up to 3,648 TJS (720 US\$) for a school of 620 students per year for WASH facilities maintenance, which translates to 0.84% of its annual PCF allocation.

⁴ Other items paid by the NGO were water system hardware installations (pipe connections to springs or central supply, storage tanks, and pump installation), latrine repair and construction and training of teachers, PTA and the CLO

Table I. Median costs of WASH O&M in School Items Reported by School Authorities

WASH in School Item	No. of Schools (median size, s)	Cost TJS (US\$)/ student/year	Cost TJS (US\$)/ median school/year
Toilet cleaning staff (school cleaner)	“1 (s=726)	4.63 (0.91)	3,360 (663)
Toilet O&M (toilet cleaning materials, small repairs,)	“5 (s=726)	1.83 (0.36)	1,330 (263)
Waste disposal (waste collection service)	“2 (s=767)	1.43 (0.28)	1,098(217)

4.3 Condition of WASH Facilities in Schools

Water facilities comprising on-site solutions, such as a water tank filled with rain or snow every month, were present in most non-supported schools. Two supported schools had piped water supplies, while others used local wells or connection to springs. Toilet facilities comprised pit latrines, while waste was disposed off in schools. Schools mostly did not have soap at handwashing basins or toilet cleaning schedules. None of the schools had menstrual hygiene management facilities.

The five NGO-supported schools had WASH facilities that were better functioning and mostly clean, compared to non-supported schools that had partially functional and mostly unclean facilities. Some of the differences may be because of the additional input received from the NGO in supported schools for renovations and maintenance of facilities.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Tajikistan has developed the resource setting for WASH in schools to some extent since its civil war ended in 1997. The MoES, along with the MoWRLR, SUE KMK and MoH share responsibilities for investing in WASH in schools, with the local administration and associated companies responsible for implementation and water and waste disposal service delivery and monitoring. Recent policies and plans for both the MoWLR and MoES prioritize quality WASH in schools and set the stage for large-scale implementation. The financing model for

schools is mainly the per-capita financing system, which has improved overall funding for schools and spending, as well as tracking of expenditures. In addition, other channels of funding, such as from public-private partnerships and from State enterprises are encouraged. Each school has a government paid cleaner who is responsible for cleaning facilities and waste disposal, as well as a logistics person who is responsible for purchasing school supplies.

Despite these good practices, rural schools reported not receiving any O&M support from their local administration other than school monitoring by the Sanitary and Epidemiological Center. Many schools rely on purchasing water or rain/ice for water tank systems and on burning or burying their waste. Although schools plan annual budgets, they do not include a line item on maintenance or WASH. The absence of this line item, as well as restrictions due to per-capita financing on cashless transactions, limits the amount that a school spends on WASH O&M. In such a situation, PTAs/PCs in NGO supported schools pay for supplies and minor repairs. However, this alternate financing system is generally not present in non-supported schools. As a result, facilities are generally only partially functional, unclean and lacking soap for handwashing.

Recommendations made by key informants to policy makers to improve the O&M of WASH facilities in schools in Tajikistan were as follows:

- Strengthen the capacity and role of local governments, community and school stakeholders to monitor and maintain school WASH facilities.

- Increase school budgets by calculating a new cost per student figure that incorporates improving and maintaining WASH facilities in schools.
- Improve the financial management systems at all levels (central, district, school) in line with the decentralization of management, and provide greater autonomy to schools to apply for and use the per-capita funding for its WASH needs.
- Accelerate fundraising for WASH in schools, both through education and WASH sector proposals, and increase school spending on WASH O&M.
- Increase staffing for WASH in schools through an additional national staff or a consultant to provide technical support on program and financial management and WASH O&M to local governments.

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