



Education and health

Advisory service

The challenge

In many of our partner countries, inadequate hygiene makes people ill. Children are particularly affected. Diarrhoea is one of the most frequent causes of death among children. At the time of school enrolment, often more than half of the children are infected with intestinal worms. In addition, one third of all children under the age of five suffer from malnutrition. Sick children are more often absent from school and therefore achieve significantly worse school results than healthy children. The lack of menstrual articles is a problem for young girls. If, in addition, suitable toilets and washing facilities are lacking in the schools, girls often stay away from school during their menstruation - in Malawi, for example, up to 70 percent of the menstruating girls do not attend school. Young people often have not received comprehensive sexuality education and have no access to contraceptives. This contributes to the fact that many girls fall pregnant. They then often have to leave school, are socially ostracized or forced to marry. HIV infections are an additional risk. The future of young people is therefore at risk: Their health is at stake, as is their professional future if they do not complete their education.

Our approach

Schools are particularly suitable for preventive health care, as preventive measures and health information reach a large proportion of children and youth and lead to health-conscious behavior. As GIZ, we make use of our many years of experience in the education and health sectors to support school health across all levels. We advise education ministries and their decentral structures and promote cooperation between ministries and administrations in the education sector and beyond. We support district authori-

ties in sensitizing school principals and parents to the topic of health care. We also advise on the implementation of measures and monitoring. We offer on-site training as well as online courses for teachers and school administrators.

Our services

We support ministries of education in anchoring measures for school health in their national sector strategies and implementing them. We also strengthen cross-sectoral cooperation networks. In the field of hygiene sensitization and prevention of communicable diseases, we work closely with school administrators and teachers. The success of measures depends on their support, which is why we offer training courses on the topic to school principals and teachers. Trainings take place face-to-face or as online trainings. We also provide support by developing models for simple hand washing facilities and concepts for the maintenance of sanitation facilities. Together with our partners, we also bring parents from the surrounding communities on board and encourage them to make small contributions, for example by giving their children toothbrushes and soap to take to school. We are also committed to providing healthy and inexpensive school meals that help improve the nutrition of children. In some projects we also support establishing school gardens. There, pupils learn how to grow and process vegetables for a healthy diet. We have experience in comprehensive sexuality education, which gives young people the knowledge to make informed decisions, avoid unwanted pregnancies and protect themselves from HIV. We support the development of teaching materials on these topics, sensitize teachers and train them so that they can educate their students without reservations.



The benefits

We offer reliable, cost-effective and simple concepts for health care in schools. Quality education and good health are interdependent. Topics such as prevention, health-conscious behavior, hygiene and healthy nutrition can be taught in schools to children and youth as well as to teachers. Adequate sanitary facilities and hygiene education in schools are a basic prerequisite for keeping children and teachers healthy. With regard to HIV/AIDS, education is considered an effective “social vaccine” that prevents new infections and risky behavior. It has also been proven that girls with a higher level of education fall pregnant later and their children have a better chance of survival. If children learn how to protect their health at school, they can also make better use of the educational opportunities available to them. In addition, school health programs benefit all children - regardless of their social background - and thus promote equity.

An example from the field

The “Fit for School” project consists of simple and cost-effective measures to improve school health in four countries in Southeast Asia. The measures can be easily replicated. The focus is on “Wash in Schools” interventions: schools and communities work together to improve access to water, washing facilities and sanitation by simple means. Children learn to brush their teeth and wash their hands regularly in a playful manner. School administrators and teachers receive training for implementing the measures. These training programs will soon be available online. School inspectors and headmasters monitor implementation and collect information with the help of an app. The data is compiled at national level and can be used for country reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). “Fit for School” reaches around 2.5 million chil-

dren in the Philippines alone. The results are measurable. The number of underweight children has dropped by 20 percent and the number of days absent from school has been reduced by around 30 percent. Tooth infections caused by caries have been reduced by 40 percent and cases of severe worm infections have been cut in half. Other countries, such as Guinea and Jordan, are also interested in this successful approach and, with the support of GIZ, are adapting it to their own contexts.

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