

GUIDANCE NOTE

# MAKING SCHOOLS GENDER-FRIENDLY





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# FOREWORD

A common view that has clearly emerged from the various debates and discussions on the increasing incidence of crime and violence against girls and women is that the process of gender sensitisation must start in homes and also in schools, where children spend the maximum time away from home. The educational system can play a cardinal role in eliminating patriarchal and stereotypical norms and sensitise children early so that they grow up believing in gender equality, and inculcating responsible conduct.

Worldwide, there is now considerable recognition and acknowledgement of the fact that the lack of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities in schools leads to drop-outs, and also raises concerns regarding safe environments for young and adolescent girls in schools. The Government of India too has made strong commitments to provide schools with adequate water, sanitation and hygiene facilities. Such a commitment is supported by legislation i.e. the Right to Education Act (2009), which necessitates the provision of drinking water and sanitation facilities in schools.

While WASH now has the attention it deserves, the idea of making schools gender friendly still does not. There is an inbuilt assumption that making Schools "WASH inclusive" will make it a gender-friendly space. This *Guidance Note* is an attempt by World Vision India to point out that besides WASH, other interventions are also needed to make schools gender friendly.

By systematically documenting its experiences and on-going work in schools in India, World Vision India has come up with an easy-to-read and yet comprehensive guidance note that outlines **a step-by-step implementable procedure**, which if followed is likely to facilitate the process of making schools gender friendly.

I hope the Guidance Note would not only be used as a learning tool by practitioners to guide their work in schools, but also be used to advocate and encourage schools and decision makers to take tangible steps in the direction of making schools gender friendly.

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## ABOUT THE GUIDANCE NOTE

School is a place – *a learning institution*, where most school-going children spend their maximum time away from home. In such a learning institution, educators or trained/qualified teachers are expected to engage with the “young minds” in a responsible manner: facilitating development of lifelong attitudes in young and growing girls and boys. Schools have key responsibilities in transferring knowledge, skills and behaviour at an early stage in life.

It is well acknowledged that the environment within a learning institution can play a critical role in teaching, endorsing and reinforcing gender roles and identities, thereby in a stereotypical manner, promote inequalities. Schools, for World Vision India, ought to be places where any prevalent negative form of gender roles and norms are challenged so that learners i.e., all students have the freedom and equal opportunities to shape their own identities and determine how they want to play out their own gender roles - thus develop a healthy gender identity and complete a basic quality education.

A major focus of World Vision India’s interventions in schools is to “Make Schools Gender Friendly”. By gender-friendly schools, World Vision India refers to **"a learning institution with a safe environment where all children - girls and boys, have equal access to opportunities and exercise their fundamental rights without any biases and discrimination to develop healthy gender identities for a better life."**

This Guidance Note is an attempt to capture the *procedural steps* followed by World Vision India as part of its intervention in schools, in making them gender friendly. The guidance note is both a stand-alone document and is meant to complement World Vision India's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on thematic sectors such as WASH, Education – all of which guide the organisation towards realising its vision and pursuing the goal of promoting the wellbeing of all children. The wellbeing of children includes ensuring that all children have access to "education, health, protection and participation".

## INTRODUCTION

Acknowledging that different situational contexts can generate different responses to the same issue, the guidance note has been drafted through a coverage of 50 schools spread over seven states viz. Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, and interactive dialogues and consultations with World Vision India Area Development Programme (ADP) teams and different stakeholders including school management, staff, students and parents. Drawing from the operational procedures in different schools and the resultant outcomes, *the guidance note underscores certain uniform intervention steps*, which if followed will facilitate – as is evident in schools where World Vision India has intervened - in making schools gender friendly.

The Guidance Note is meant to act as a learning tool for World Vision India and guide its work towards replicating and scaling up in schools. Also, the purpose is to promote the set of procedural steps and advocate for them so as to encourage schools and decision makers to take tangible steps in the direction of making schools gender friendly. The guidance note will help other development practitioners as well, to draw from World Vision India's experiences.

- Most schools, government or government aided, in any context - be it rural, urban, peri-urban, tribal and backward areas - do not accord any priority to “make schools gender friendly”. By missing out on this critical element, schools are likely to deprive children of their "holistic development".
- World Vision India adopts a Community Development Approach, wherein the school is a key focal point to reach out to children.

A number of factors led World Vision India to specifically focus on “making schools gender friendly”. These array of factors, commonly found, include lack of basic infrastructure (including properly maintained and separate toilets for girls; clean drinking water) in schools; teachers’ attitudes and behaviours promoting gender stereotypes and biases; lack of health and hygiene awareness; absence of sports equipment or safe playing areas and informative libraries. These have led to student absenteeism, girl child drop out, poor health and sanitation among children. Equally importantly, the rising violence and crimes against girls and women, make it imperative to orient all children and make them learn from an early stage in life and grow to respect gender identities.

*World Vision India works in government or government aided schools across India. The need to advocate for making schools gender friendly emanates from schools not paying adequate attention to it. Equally importantly, the rising violence and crimes against girls and women make it imperative to orient all children and make them learn from an early stage in life and grow to respect gender identities.*

- It has been World Vision India’s experience that lack of resources - human and financial as well as lack of technical know-how often dissuades schools/its staff and/or its management from according primacy to ‘make schools gender friendly’ (inclusive of WASH facilities, which is now widely recognised and promoted) and adopt a systematic approach.

- World Vision India's focus to make schools gender friendly essentially combines **three key elements**:
  - a. Facilitating infrastructure development and its maintenance
  - b. Imparting software/soft skills development (attributed as non-physical elements)
  - c. Advocating at multiple levels – school (students, teachers and management); community (including parents) and government.
  
- In World Vision India's experience with Schools, it is evident that
  - a. Gender-friendly schools ensure basic quality education with positive learning impact on students (also teachers), their families as well as the community. In this regard, they challenge and in the process transform any negative gender stereotyping, and enable girls and boys students equally to develop healthy gender identities.
  - b. As a corollary, gender-friendly schools enable students - both girls and boys, develop their faculties, and make choices without having to follow set stereotypes or rigid gender roles.
  - c. Gender-friendly schools are a low-cost proposition with a timeframe of, at the most, one academic year required to achieve the three elements mentioned above, and ensure their long-term sustainability. The low-cost proposition is not just about monetary expenses but more about the value addition in terms of long-term impact on schools, students, family and community.
  - d. Public Private Partnerships can add to the success of making such model schools, and help replicate/upscale creation of such schools.



## WHY THE GUIDANCE NOTE?

- In India, many schools - be it in rural, urban and peri-urban, tribal and backward – are far behind in understanding, according priority, and ensuring that schools are gender friendly.
- Until thus far, it has been very well recognised that *lack of WASH facilities in schools leads to drop-outs, also raises concerns regarding 'safe environment' for young and adolescent girls in schools.* The Government of India has a strong commitment to providing schools with adequate water, sanitation and hygiene facilities. Such a commitment is supported by legislation i.e., the Right to Education Act (2009), which necessitates ensuring the availability of drinking water and sanitation facilities in schools. Further, the national flagship programmes – *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)* and the *Nirmal Gram Puraskar* - support this requirement.
- What is of **equal concern** is the increasing rate of crime and violence against women and children (particularly girl children). *The 'fear of crime' adds to the restricted or curtailed movement of young girls out of their homes.* Increasing crime rates and violence against women have led to debates that the process of gender sensitisation must start in schools, where children spend their maximum time away from home. The educational system can play a cardinal role in eliminating patriarchal and stereotypical norms and sensitise children early so that they grow up believing in gender equality, and practising responsible conduct.

- While WASH now has the attention it deserves, the idea of making schools gender friendly does not. There is an inbuilt assumption that making schools WASH inclusive will make it a gender-friendly space.

*Increasing crime rates and violence against women have led to debates that the process of gender sensitisation must start in schools, where children spend their maximum time away from home. The educational system can play a cardinal role in eliminating patriarchal and stereotypical norms and sensitising children early so that they grow up believing in gender equality and practising responsible conduct.*

- This *Guidance Note* is based on World Vision India's ongoing work in making schools gender friendly. Systematic documentation of how World Vision India's work unfolds itself in schools (to achieve desired results) has led to an **identification of a step-by-step implementable procedure**, which this guidance note has captured.
- This note is primarily meant to guide World Vision India teams in their work in schools. It will also be used as an advocacy tool in *making schools gender friendly*.

## HOW THE GUIDANCE NOTE HAS BEEN DEVELOPED?

- World Vision India has a pan-India presence across rural, urban, peri-urban, and tribal contexts. Acknowledging that contexts can generate different responses to the same issue, the guidance note has been drafted through a coverage of 50 schools spread over seven States viz. Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal; and interactive dialogues and consultations with World Vision India ADP teams and different stakeholders including school management, staff, students and parents, community members and government functionaries.
- Drawing from the process of interventions in different schools and the resultant outcomes, the *guidance note underscores certain uniform intervention steps*, which if followed will facilitate the process of making schools gender friendly.
- To make it a user-friendly and easy-to-read/comprehend document, the Guidance Note lists out the process of interventions in the form of SIX STEPS. Step SEVEN draws from these six steps to create a 10-point Thumb Rule, which can be used as a *checklist* to gauge how close schools are to being gender friendly. The last and final step: STEP EIGHT is about Celebrating Success. Closer a school is to achieving the 10-point Thumb Rule, closer it is to celebrating success in terms of becoming a gender-friendly school.

A draft of the Guidance Note was first prepared in consultation with World Vision India ADP teams located in Vellore and Gingee (Tamil Nadu) and Faridabad

(Haryana) where interventions in schools by World Vision India have been recognised and commended by local/district administration. The draft was subsequently discussed with a larger World Vision India group through a one-day sharing and learning exercise to make any further additions to the existing draft. This was then taken up for validation by World Vision India Gender team in different schools. A validation of the step-by-step intervention as mentioned herein led to the formalisation of the guidance note, to streamline gender in schools, and make schools gender friendly.

- The validation exercise, spread over one month, was primarily divided into two segments viz. a) detailed interactive discussion with World Vision India ADP teams undertaking interventions in schools covered; b) school visits wherein in-depth interactive discussions were held with school management, staff, members of school committees constituted to oversee activities in schools (e.g. School Management Committee), students, parents and influential community members (who may be contributing to the process of making schools gender friendly). In addition, meetings were held with government officials in the education department; also officials of other departments or any technical person (e.g. a civil engineer) who had a role to play in making schools gender friendly.
- The Guidance Note is a *dynamic document*. As World Vision India's resources and capacities grow, it is expected that its interventions towards making schools gender friendly may further evolve. **As an active document, the guidance note has the scope to include any alterations made to intervention steps or strategies in the future.**

## PROCESS OF INTERVENTIONS IN SCHOOLS

### STEP ONE

#### Identifying and Listing Challenges

The process of making schools gender friendly begins with visiting the school; understanding how it functions; meeting its staff, students and management; taking note of all the services the school offers, i.e., all available facilities and their accessibility; and interacting with the parents.

Visits to schools lead to the identification and listing of challenges. There are multiple challenges when it comes to making schools gender friendly. A listing of all possible challenges acts as a checklist or a reminder of likely tasks ahead.

#### Challenges

- Need to challenge gender stereotypes. For instance, ensuring girls are sent to school; also, those in school attend school, during menstruation; encouraging parents to show interest in educating their girl children
- Need to bring about behavioural changes. This hinges upon addressing the following issues:
  - ↓ Lack of ownership by school management (due to lack of gender sensitivity)
  - ↓ Lack of toilets for girls (also women staff) which influences dropout rates
  - ↓ Poor maintenance of school premises (in some cases, there are no boundary walls) and its infrastructure (adding to unhealthy physical environment at school)

- ↓ Lack of water facilities (also leading to multiple health hazards)
- ↓ Lack of drainage and disposal facilities (due to financial constraints)
- ↓ Absence of any curriculum that gives priority to or specifically addresses gender-related issues (e.g. biases at home towards girl child; early marriage; child rights and protection; menstrual health and hygiene)
- ↓ Absence of adequate human resources (affecting student-teacher ratio. The RTE Act says that the student-teacher ratio (Classes I to VIII) has to be 30:1; also no cleaner/sweeper or janitor to keep school premises or its facilities clean/safe)

- Corruption and/or red-tapism in procuring required permission and approval for infrastructural changes or any hardware installation in schools, like toilet facilities that includes roofing/flooring; electrification; incinerators, etc.
- Lack of cooperation from local leaders/community members in organising community programmes/trainings linked to building awareness; also, lack of interest among community in participating in community programmes linked to gender sensitisation.
- Lack of interest among parents in educating their children – especially those who are illiterate or go for daily wage earning. Also, minimal participation by parents in Parent-Teacher Meetings.
- Lack of support from or no coordination between panchayat and school management (in rural areas).

Listing of challenges is a reminder of tasks ahead

## STEP TWO

## Reaching a Common Ground

Identification of challenges facilitates reaching a common ground as to what is constitutive of making schools gender friendly? Reaching a common ground is a result of discussions with the school; its management and staff; students and their parents; government functionaries and other community influencers. It translates into a number of things.

- a) Availability of infrastructure that provides a safe and secure environment for children, especially girl children attending school. The school infrastructure if planned properly is one of the key factors in effective teaching and learning. Infrastructure is inclusive of
- Safe premises, i.e., having a boundary wall for school
  - A playground; where possible, a library or creative play room/space
  - Proper electrification (in toilets, classrooms)
  - Drinking water facilities
  - Neat and clean school premises
  - Separate toilets for boys & girls (also male and female staff) and its proper maintenance. Toilets, especially for girls, covered with RCC roofing on the top; also, location of toilets at a visible distance.
  - Proper drainage and septic tank facility; along with facility for disposal of used napkins, wastages etc.
- b) Awareness and sensitisation through school curriculum that ensures quality education.
- c) This includes
- Challenging gender stereotypes and biases
  - Creating awareness on WASH, menstrual health and personal hygiene (teachers/educators must not shy away for raising and talking on issues related to menstrual health and hygiene; addressing adolescent needs)
  - Creating child- and adolescent-friendly school environment through creative activities and information dissemination
- d) Encouraging and facilitating school and its management. This includes
- Dialogue and consultations to accord priority to making schools gender friendly
  - Promoting gender sensitisation sessions within school curriculum (as part of each academic year)
  - Monitoring (educational) indicators, e.g., more children attending school on a regular basis and lower drop-out rate; better performance by students in class; maintenance of infrastructure; proper functioning of school management committees (SMCs); and gender balance in such committees.

*Reaching a common ground is a result of discussions with school – its management and staff; students and their parents; government functionaries and other community influencers.*

### STEP THREE

#### Chalking out the Interventions

Based on the common grounds, i.e., what is constitutive of making schools gender friendly, interventions are planned and chalked out. It covers two major heads as follows

- a) Infrastructure development. This is constitutive of:
  - i) School's overall physical space and environment, which is also disabled friendly
  - ii) Constructing/renovating toilets and their maintenance
  - iii) Drinking water and hand wash facilities
  - iv) Electrification
  - v) Drainage and disposal facilities
  
- b) Software/soft skills development. This is constitutive of:
  - i) Awareness building, especially with regard to adolescent health and hygiene, gender education that challenges negative biases and stereotypes, importance of WASH;
  - ii) Challenging and transforming behavioural attitudes-school management and staff; students and parents; community and government – through creative, educative and informative toolkits
  - iii) Advocating at various relevant levels, including the school management, to make schools gender friendly.

*Interventions cover two major heads: infrastructure development and soft skills development besides advocating for gender-friendly schools*

**STEP FOUR****Infrastructure Development****1) Renovation, Construction or Installation.**

This includes

- a) Creating a boundary wall, where it does not exist.
- b) Ensuring water facilities for drinking, hand washing and toilets with provision of adequate number of taps (where there is water scarcity or shortage, using or providing water tanks to store water)
- c) Proper electrification to ensure that toilets, classrooms are well-lit
- d) Availability of spaces like playground and library to play and engage in creative activities
- e) Toilets facilities (separate for girls and boys; and disabled friendly) so that children will have a safe place to use and girl children need not miss their classes during menstruation (also separate toilets for male and female staff). Ensuring that toilets have concrete flooring, proper roofing, wash basin, doors, ventilation, etc.
- f) Drainage and (covered) septic tank so that there is no open drainage, and to ensure proper disposal of waste; Dustbins or incinerators for disposal of used sanitary napkins (to also avoid health hazards)
- g) Provision for special assistive devices and technology for special children or children with disabilities
- h) Maintaining an overall clean and neat school premises by also encouraging schools to take initiatives (e.g., plant trees; levelling playground; rain water

harvesting; providing proper furniture in classrooms and their maintenance; placing water filters)

**2) Technical Assistance.** This includes

- a) Involving a technical person who assesses the needs of the school and formulates a plan best suited to it. The plan leads to estimating the cost.
- b) Technical assistance helps to ensure use of quality and standardised materials, hiring skilled and semi-skilled labourers for renovation/construction works, following safety norms (for example, if toilets are being constructed, they are located away from classrooms but in a visible place)
- c) Due government approval procured – No Objection Certificate (NOC) in case of re-construction, construction or installation in the school premises.
- d) All costs estimated with due verification.

*Infrastructure development plays a critical role in creating a conducive and secure environment for learning. It involves renovation, construction or installation. It requires involvement of a technical person besides approval from government/school authorities*



**STEP FIVE****Soft Skills Development**

Making schools gender friendly is not only about creating and strengthening infrastructure, it is substantiated with simultaneous promotion of soft skills —so-called non-physical attributes through Awareness, Education and (self) Monitoring.

Soft skills development includes:

- 1) Training/awareness/sensitisation of students
    - a) Promoting health and hygiene programmes by providing training using pamphlets, CDs, animations, etc. These consists of educating and demonstrating the importance of hygiene practices like hand washing, bathing and other WASH practices for a healthy living. Also, wall paintings on WASH or other themes (which also adds to the beautification of the school)
    - b) Gender-sensitive training and education programmes using pamphlets, CDs, animations, skits/plays, cultural programmes etc. whereby learned behaviours and gender stereotypes are challenged; gender biases like early child marriage, discrimination at home are addressed; and education for girls and respect for girls and women are promoted.
    - c) Physical education and sports activities/competitions for both girls and boys.
    - d) Providing WASH kits which include bath soap, paste, brush, oil, comb, nail cutter etc. (to encourage children and parents to give priorities to hygiene products and buy them as part of their routine requirement)
  - e) Adolescent counselling in schools; also, educating young girls on pubescent and post-pubescent changes, and sexual/reproductive health through pamphlets, animations, CDs and training programmes on Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM), sexual touch and reproductive health. Through such programmes, sanitary napkins and Iron/Folic Acid (IFA) tablets are also distributed.
  - f) Leadership Personality Development through formation of Girl Power Groups or Community-Based Child Monitoring (CBCM) to monitor the girls within the community with peer group leaders to ensure the well-being of girls even at their homes and to intimate the community leaders in case of problems faced by one girl at home or a group of girls anywhere in the community.
- 2) Capacity building for service providers /management, parents and community at large
    - i) Female teacher mentoring programmes whereby they monitor the progress of the child mentally, academically and physically in school. They also monitor the attendance of the girl students, and ensure their well-being (along with ensuring all children continuously take part in WASH practices like hand washing)
    - ii) Awareness on education policies, services and standards (e.g., no corporal punishment; equal participation of girls

- and boys in all school activities; gender neutral roles and responsibilities in schools)
  - iii) Mobilising parents through community programmes on the importance of hand washing and hygiene practices (so that they can also monitor their children to undertake WASH practices at home); also address issues of gender disparities and their adverse outcomes
  - iv) Gender-sensitive training to teachers and SMC members to ensure that the school does not discriminate children on the basis of their gender; and efforts are made by the management to create a gender-friendly environment in school
  - v) Encourage community-based monitoring
- 3) Advocating at the community and school level to make schools gender friendly
- i) Equal opportunity for school enrolment for all children residing in the vicinity regardless of caste, class, gender or religion
  - ii) Functional whistle blower cell/ gender cell/ child protection (CP) cell in every school
  - iii) Encouraging gender audit where SMC takes action on gender issues
  - iv) Availability of school safety and risk management guidelines
  - v) Promotion of girl child education and enrolment
  - vi) Gender balance in all school committees; also teachers' recruitment
  - vii) Age-appropriate syllabus on gender in the school
  - viii) Not allowing pictures or photographs or graffiti that in any manner represents or reflects gender discrimination

- ix) Integrating gender sensitisation programmes within the school curriculum, assigning dedicated time in an academic year

*"Soft Interventions" or promoting non-physical attributes are integral to making schools gender friendly*

**STEP SIX****Noting the outcomes**

Intervening to make schools gender friendly is paving the way for schools to become not only clean and green i.e., environmentally friendly but also encouraging children to come and learn without fear of any insecurity or biases.

While happy and healthy children who are now ambitious, motivated and empowered is the key achievement, specifically, as is evident, there are a number of clear-cut outcomes

- Definite increase in female enrolment ratios and retention of girl children in school
- Regular attendance in school (particularly due to construction/renovation of toilets)

- Lower rate of absenteeism by girl children, especially during menstruation
- Improved performance among children
- Change in behavioural attitudes (whereby children are respectful towards each other; teachers encourage both girls and boys to participate and learn from different activities; children themselves try their best to remain clean and hygienic at all times; hand washing practised)
- Increase in application for admission to schools
- School is now a safer and secure place to learn and study
- Improved cleanliness of school premises
- Public Private Partnership providing monetary and technical know-how

*Interventions to make schools gender friendly yields, as is evident, a number of clear-cut outcomes (e.g. increased enrolment and retention of girl children in school; lower rate of absenteeism by girl children especially during menstruation; improved cleanliness of school premises)*

**STEP SEVEN**

**10 Thumb Rules!**

10 Thumb Rules draw from the preceding steps (STEP ONE to STEP SIX) and are developed to be primarily used as a checklist to gauge how close schools are to being gender friendly. The following table depicts a set of parameters against each of the Thumb Rule. These parameters are indicative i.e., more parameters can always be added as schools evolve and better adapt themselves to being gender friendly. Needless to say, achieving the parameters gives a boost to the achievement of the Thumb Rule!

10 THUMB RULE	INDICATIVE PARAMETERS
A conducive and safe environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boundary wall; properly manned gate with security guard (if feasible, also night watchman to guard school property)</li> <li>• Proper signage indicating existence of a school (also to curb any trespassing/thoroughfare)</li> <li>• Location of toilets/urinals within school premises at visible distance</li> <li>• Sufficient classrooms; required furniture (chair, tables, blackboards)and properly maintained</li> <li>• Adequate student-teacher ratio</li> <li>• Neat and clean school premises (visibly placed “Use Me” Dustbins)</li> </ul>
Availability of spaces within school premises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playground with safe playpen materials (slide, swing, sea-saw, merry-go-round) and sports materials (footballs, rings, badminton, etc.)</li> <li>• Reading spaces/library with sufficient and informative books</li> <li>• Space/dining hall for children to sit and eat food</li> <li>• Safe laboratory with complete usable apparatus</li> </ul>
Clean and well-maintained toilets; Proper drainage and disposal system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean and well-maintained toilets; 24x7 running water</li> <li>• Overhead storage tank</li> <li>• Sufficient number of covered toilets (separate toilets for girls and boys; also for male and female staff) with proper flooring, roofing, water and electricity</li> <li>• Doors and windows for safety and proper ventilation</li> <li>• Septic tank as per the number of toilets in the school; Incinerators</li> <li>• Proper drainage out flow</li> </ul>

<p>Special assistive devices, technology and essential infrastructure for children with special needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disabled-friendly ramp with railing for classrooms and toilets with proper electrification</li> <li>• Easily approachable disabled-friendly toilets (DFT)</li> <li>• Separate DFTs for boys and girls with complete roofing, anti-skid tiles, shock proof electrification, doors and windows for safety and proper ventilation</li> <li>• DFT for girls to be along with the other girls’ toilets with immediate access to the incinerator</li> </ul>
<p>Safe drinking water and hand washing facilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand-washing platform with usable/functional taps</li> <li>• Easy access to liquid soap</li> <li>• 24x7 water supply (through RO Water Purifiers/Water filters)</li> </ul>
<p>Awareness building and early gender sensitisation (through trained teachers/educators)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As part of school curriculum:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gender sensitisation and awareness for students and teachers</li> <li>- Awareness on WASH, adolescent needs and health and menstrual hygiene</li> <li>- Awareness programmes on “good touch bad touch”; child protection; Protection of children from sexual offences (POCSO) Act; cyber-crimes; child trafficking</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Also, not allowing in school premises any pictures/photographs/graffiti that in any manner represents/reflects gender discrimination</li> </ul>
<p>Availability of easy to read and comprehend informative booklets, tool kits etc. for children to facilitate their “knowing and learning”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age-appropriate syllabus on gender in the school</li> <li>• Gender Toolkit including resources on making schools gender friendly</li> <li>• Adolescent sexual and reproductive health information toolkit</li> <li>• Safety booklets</li> <li>• Animated videos on child protection; menstrual health and hygiene; hand washing</li> <li>• Information kits in local languages</li> </ul>
<p>Community mobilisation and engagement in addressing gender issues in school and at home besides encouraging them to ensure a clean environment in schools and at home</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender sensitisation and WASH Training sessions with the community</li> <li>• Encouraging parents to involve themselves and actively participate in SMC/PTA/MTA</li> <li>• Equal opportunity for school enrolment for all children residing in the vicinity regardless of <i>caste, class, gender or religion</i></li> <li>• Promotion of Girl Child Education and Enrolment in schools (also through <i>panchayat</i> leadership/community influencers)</li> </ul>

<p>Active participation of Parent Teacher Association (PTA), Mother Teacher Association (MTA) Students, Management, Staff, School Management Committees (SMC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMC/PTA monitoring of school activities and facilities</li> <li>• Functional whistle blower cell/ gender cell/CP cell in school</li> <li>• Encourage gender audit where SMC takes action on gender issues</li> </ul>
<p>Public Private Partnership in making schools gender friendly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools network with corporates and NGOs/INGOs to generate/mobilise resources to facilitate school/ classroom infrastructure</li> </ul>

## STEP EIGHT

### Celebrate Success

The “10 Thumb Rule” becomes easier to follow when

- School authorities include gender sensitisation in the school curriculum wherein at least one class/period each week is dedicated to highlighting key and relevant issues pertaining to gender, inclusive of WASH and health issues
- Separate funds allocated for regular monitoring and maintenance of school premises, its infrastructure, and gender-related programmes
- School management, staff, parents and students are actively involved in gender sensitisation programmes
- Gender and other tool kits offered enable children to learn from them and make use of them in their routine/day-to-day lives
- Cooperation and collaboration from government departments in making schools gender friendly

*The key to success is the active involvement of the school authorities; the community including parents; cooperation and support from relevant government departments.*



## TIME FRAME

For World Vision India, the process of intervening in schools to make them gender-friendly involves STEPS ONE to SIX. Its experience shows:

- The time taken for infrastructural development in terms of renovation, construction or installation of any hardware - once NOC is procured and plans and funds are in place with due approvals - can range from less than a month in case of installing doors for toilets, wash basins, taps for drinking water to as long as four to six months in the case of renovation/construction of toilets, setting up a boundary wall.
- However, the preparation time to formalise/introduce as a school curriculum - one period/class each week that systematically covers a wide range of related issues like WASH, health and gender sensitisation is generally a long drawn process. The process involves a number of consultations with school authorities; in some cases, with government departments as well. It can easily take up to one year to integrate as part of school curriculum, soft skills development.

## CONCLUSION

Schools have key responsibilities in transferring knowledge, skills and behaviour at an early stage in life. World Vision India firmly believes that schools ought to be places where any prevalent negative form of gender roles and norms are challenged so that young learners i.e. students, as they complete their basic education and schooling, grow up to develop a healthy gender identity.

The guidance note on 'Making Schools Gender Friendly', has drawn from World Vision India's experiences and on-going work in government schools in India. Based on certain uniform intervention steps in 50 schools including schools under "Support My School" campaign, the note outlines the step-by-step procedure. The procedure is easily implementable, as is evident in schools where World Vision India has intervened.

The guidance note has underscored that making schools gender friendly is not just about strengthening the infrastructure of a school but it entails orienting, developing and integrating soft skills in school curriculum. Further, gender-friendly schools are a low-cost proposition. The low-cost proposition is not only about financial costs but is also about the value addition in terms of long-term impact on schools, students, family and community.

The note is meant to act as a learning tool for World Vision India and guide its work in schools. We are hopeful that our experiences shall encourage Government and other schools as well as decision makers to take tangible steps in the direction of making schools gender friendly.



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