

WASH United (WASH = Water, Sanitation and Hygiene): Harnessing the power of play to promote sanitation and hygiene

Nairobi, (and in different locations), Kenya Berlin, Germany



Thorsten Kiefer



Year Founded:
2011

Organization type:

hybrid

Project Stage:

Established

Budget:

\$1 million - \$5 million

Website:

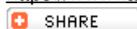
<http://www.wash-united.org/>

Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/WASHUnited>

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Project Summary

Elevator Pitch

Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.

WASH United (WASH = Water, Sanitation & Hygiene) develops interactive games that use the power of fun and play to educate children and

change behaviour around the difficult issues of sanitation and hygiene. To maximise impact, we share our game-based tools through a social business model.

WHAT IF - Inspiration: Write one sentence that describes a way that your project dares to ask, "WHAT IF?"

we had games that turned sanitation into an aspiration and made handwashing with soap cool?

About Project

Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?

Diarrhoea caused by poor sanitation and lack of hygiene kills more children than malaria, measles and HIV/AIDS combined. Countless more are left physically and mentally retarded as their bodies can't absorb critical nutrients. Millions of girls drop out of school at the onset of puberty because they can't manage their periods at school. Existing interventions fail to break taboos around these issues and inspire children to practice good behavior.

Solution: What is the proposed solution? Please be specific!

WASH United creates aspirations around sanitation, handwashing with soap and menstrual hygiene and make learning and practicing life-saving behaviour fun. Our "secret ingredients" to achieve this are games, sport stars as role models and positive communication. A mixture between NGO and a creative agency, we offer a portfolio of educational tools to all organisations interested in using the proven WASH United approach to generate awareness, knowledge and behaviour change on sanitation and hygiene. This portfolio includes a wide range of fun, interactive learning and behaviour change games on toilet use, hand-washing and menstrual hygiene that have been field-tested with thousands of children across Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

Impact: How does it Work

Example: Walk us through a specific example(s) of how this solution makes a difference; include its primary activities.

In late 2012, WASH United partnered with the government of India for a large-scale WASH-themed carnival called The Great WASH Yatra, which featured around 30 WASH-games and labs. All in all, the Yatra trained 8,400 children at 149 schools and more than 160,000 carnival visitors using fun WASH games. In 2014, WASH United was a charity partner for the ICC T20 Cricket World Cup, including the women's tournament. Around the women's matches, we carried out game-based menstrual hygiene management trainings with students and brought the issue into the stadium. For 2015, WASH United plans the WASH Challenge Cup in Eastern Africa which aims to build the capacity of football-4-development partners to work with game-based WASH trainings.

Impact: What is the impact of the work to date? Also describe the projected future impact for the coming years.

WASH United & partners have trained more than 100,000 children in good WASH behaviour in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. The number of people reached through advocacy campaigns is more than 500 million. Our impact / outcome is measured in increased knowledge, improved behaviour, and indicative changes such as improved cleanliness. Long-term impact such as positive health impacts (reduction of diarrhea) or educational impacts (reduced school drop-outs, increased performance) are difficult to measure and attribute, unless funding for RCT is available.

Spread Strategies: Moving forward, what are the main strategies for scaling impact?

Our vision is to become the go-to-stop for cool, exciting and effective tools and materials to promote WASH knowledge and behaviour change. The potential for scaling our approach is huge, both in the WASH sector and in other sectors (education, sport & development, etc) who increasingly understand the importance of WASH, but don't have compelling tools yet. Geographical focus is on the regions with the biggest WASH challenges, i.e. South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. We are planning to share our tools as widely as possible through on & offline catalogues and a social business model.

Sustainability

Financial Sustainability Plan: What is this solution's plan to ensure financial sustainability?

WASH United will always have grants, sponsoring and donations. This is complemented by a 3-layered social business model for sharing our tools with other organizations: 1) Tailor made solutions against fee: tailor-made design and R&D to fit the partner's specific needs; 2) mass-customized products against small fee including logo, design adaptations, translation); 3) off-the shelf products for free, suitable for smaller organisations.

Marketplace: Who else is addressing the problem outlined here? How does the proposed project differ from these approaches?

Most organisations working in water, sanitation and hygiene advocacy and behaviour change still work with booklets and posters using negative health-based messaging communicated through traditional frontal instruction methods. WASH United is the first WASH sector organisation that consequently focuses on interactive WASH-themed games to create exciting, positive child-focused learning experiences for increased knowledge and behaviour change around sanitation and hygiene. There is very strong demand for our unique game-based WASH curricula, including for our new menstrual hygiene tools.

Team

Founding Story

In 2010, as the FIFA Football World Cup created excitement for the game all over Africa, dozens of organisations were using football for development issues, but no one focussed on one of the biggest, yet most neglected key challenges in Africa: sanitation and hygiene. Thorsten Kiefer, a human rights lawyer and huge football fan, decided to give it a try himself. He had a chat with a friend at Bayern Munich and when Bayern stars agreed to become ambassadors for sanitation and hygiene in Africa, the idea for WASH United was born. A year later, in 2010, WASH United (hosted by German NGO Brot für die Welt) started campaigns combining WASH-games and stars ambassadors in 8 countries in Africa. The response was amazing. We never looked back.

Team

WASH United is blessed with a team of extremely talented and passionate individuals, driven by the commitment to help end the WASH crisis in our lifetime - or collapse trying. Our multidisciplinary team includes WASH engineers, communication experts, trainers, human right lawyers, admin experts and professionals from the creative industries. WASH United has 10 staff at our Berlin HQ, 8 in Nairobi and 3 in India.

About You

Organization:

WASH United gGmbH

About You

First Name

Thorsten

Last Name

Kiefer

Twitter URL

Facebook URL

About Your Project

Organization Name

WASH United gGmbH

How long has your organization been operating?

Please select

Project

Organization Country

, Berlin

Country where this project is creating social impact

, Nairobi, (and in different locations)

What awards or honors has the project received?

Funding: How is your project financial supported?

Foundations, NGOs, Businesses, National government, Customers.

Supplemental

Awards

- 2012 Beyond Sport "Sport for Health" Award
- 2012 Ashoka Fellowship for WASH United Founder & CEO Thorsten Kiefer
- 2011 AfricaSan Award
- 2011 Global Sports Forum Award

Primary Target Age Group

6 - 12, 13 - 17.

Your role in Education

After-School Provider, Other.

Please specify which of the following best applies:

I am applying on behalf of a particular program or initiative.

The type of school(s) your solution is affiliated with (if applicable)

Public (tuition-free), Other.

Intervention Focus

Extracurricular, Community.

Does your project utilize any of the innovative design principles below?

Actively Designing Space & Culture as Essential Elements for Learning: Creating cost-effective methods to infuse a school with habits, language, and materials needed for learning through play.

Is your project targeted at solving any of the following key barriers?

Whole child development is undervalued: Essential parts of development get left behind as children get older, such as healthy habits, executive function, and social and emotional learning.

Need

RCT of game-based vs frontal learning / role of sportstars / of self-awareness

Offer

Game-based tools for sanitation and hygiene knowledge and behaviour change, M&E methodologies

What key learning outcomes does your work seek to improve?

- Increased knowledge on sanitation & hygiene
- Adoption of good wash behaviour (handwashing with soap, toilet use, menstrual hygiene)
- improvements in school WASH facilities (cleanliness, regular trainings, maintenance, ...)
- improved self-esteem

In the long-run: reduce the occurrence of diarrhea and reduce school drop-outs, especially among girls

Secondary Form

PROGRAM DESIGN CLARITY: We are hungry to know more about what exactly your model consists of. Please succinctly list a) what main activities are you doing with your beneficiaries, b) where you carry out the activities? c) how often? d) for how many hours? e) who delivers the services? and f) any other brief details

- a) we carry out a game-based curriculum designed to improve our beneficiaries' WASH knowledge and behaviour.
- b) primarily in schools and youth sport clubs, but also communities
- c) Trained local NGOs, teachers and peer educators regularly repeat sessions
- d) A session takes several hours
- e) local NGO partners, trained teachers and peer educators
- f) Our games are very different from other games currently used by WASH sector organizations. WASH United games are action-oriented physical activities that take WASH issues out of the class-room, involving everyone in the class. They are not only extremely fun and exciting, but enable children to generate their insights through fun game experiences they share with their friends. Emotional rewards (like membership cards featuring our celebrity ambassadors) reinforce the experience.

INSPIRATION: What do you consider the most important trends or evidence that inspire you to believe the world is ready to Re-imagine Learning? Please elaborate.

The WASH sector provides prime proof for the fact that the world is ready to re-imagine learning. For decades, well-meaning experts assumed that building toilets would be enough. India and Africa are full of unused toilets that serve as chicken houses, storage space or temples. Fortunately, there is increasing recognition that infrastructure must go hand in hand with increased knowledge and behaviour change, and partly due to our work, the WASH sector is increasingly turning to games to help achieve just that.

Toilet people ready to play? The world is clearly ready to re-imagine learning!

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY: What does "learning through play" mean to you and why it is a must-have, instead of a nice to have?

To us, learning through play means to see the joy on a child's face when it has fun playing a great game with friends and learns at the same time. It also means playing games like the "World Toilet Cup" with Ministers responsible for WASH to break the ice and have frank and open discussions on issues that are often considered dirty and unspeakable.

In our work to change attitudes and behaviours around difficult issues such as toilets and menstrual hygiene management, learning through play, fun and games have proven to be absolutely essential ingredients for success.

SUSTAINABILITY: Please list a quick breakdown of your funding, indicating the percentage that comes from each source.

For 2014:

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation: 60%

GIZ: 20%

German Federal Foreign Office: 8%

Other (Georgetown University, Unicef, etc): 12%

Georgetown University – 80.000 USD – for the c

MODEL: How does your mission relate to your business model (i.e. Non-profit, for-profit or hybrid)?

WASH United's goal is to make our innovative new approaches to WASH advocacy and behaviour change accessible to as many organizations as possible. To achieve that, we have developed a 3-layer business/distribution model, which allows us to offer standard tools, but also tailor-made solutions.

WASH United is non-profit, but to be able to provide consulting services, we will soon add a "Limited" to become a hybrid.

FUNDING PRIORITIES: If your organization were given \$20K in unrestricted funding today, how would you use it? Why?

Invest in R&D for a „WASH Box“ with extremely low-costs games and a self-explanatory game manual that can be produced and used by everyone, everywhere.

Why? Because such a product would have huge potential to go to scale and R&D funds are extremely hard to get.

PARTNERSHIPS: Tell us about your partnerships that enhance your approach.

Partnerships with football clubs like Bayern Munich or federations like the International Cricket Council have helped us make our approach extra exciting for kids and adults. We work with streetfootballworld on a program called the WASH Challenge Cup, for which we adopt our WASH games for sport 4 development organizations. This has helped us improve our facilitation guides. More generally, feedback from our local partners has been critical.

COLLABORATIONS: Have you considered or initiated partnerships with any of the other Challenge Pacesetters? If so, please share.

Heeals India is one of the of the partner organizations for Menstrual Hygiene Day, a global advocacy initiative on the issue of menstrual hygiene management WASH United initiated in 2013. We first met Heeals on our "The Great WASH Yatra" travelling carnival, which inspired them to also use games.

VISION: If you had unlimited funding, and you could fast forward 15 years to when your program has been able to achieve wild success - what will it have achieved?

In 15 years, a wide range of actors - government agencies, grassroots NGOs, individual teachers, even parents - has access to and works with a

broad array of extremely affordable game-based WASH United tools and materials to promote WASH knowledge and behaviour change. As more actors do more effective work on the issue, we are moving towards a world in which everyone, everywhere has access to and uses a toilet and practises good hygiene.

IMPACT - KEY METRICS: Please list the key data points that you would cite as evidence that you are able to achieve lasting learning outcomes. Please also share one data point for which you most hope to see better results over time

Since 2010, WASH United and partners have trained more than 130,000 using our game-based curriculum in India, Bangladesh, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Lesotho, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Mali and South Africa. Our most recent evaluation of a pilot project with Sanergy in 25 schools in Kenya showed significant increases in hand-washing practice compared to the baseline. See attached report. We would love to have better data re behavior change over time.

IMPACT - REPORTING SAMPLE: Please attach any examples of your impact reporting. [optional]:

[fit-washunited_summary.pdf](#)

RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE: Please link or attach any research or evidence resource you are open to sharing more widely [optional].

Building research and evidence is a key aim of this initiative, and the resources you share may be chosen for listing in the [Center for Education Innovations library](#):

[report_winsevaluation-nby_ext2.pdf](#)

SOURCE: If applicable - who created the research or evidence you are choosing to share? :

IMPACT - REACH: How many people did your project directly engage in programmatic activities in the last year?

50,001 to 100,000

STUDY: Has an external evaluation or study been conducted of your organization?

Yes

Other (please specify)

Number of Employees:

10-100

Number of Volunteers:

Fewer than 10

APPROACHES: Given the complexity of play, it is not surprising that there have been numerous research attempts to categorize the different types and approaches! Please indicate which of the following your project focuses on.

Games with Rules.

Other (please specify)

AFFILIATION: Please specify if your organization has any existing affiliations with the LEGO Group.

No.

Source URL: <https://www.changemakers.com/play2learn/entries/wash-united>