

Message 2 - Sanitation is a Good Economic Investment

The health impact of inadequate sanitation leads to a number of financial and economic costs including direct medical costs associated with treating sanitation-related illnesses and lost income through reduced or lost productivity and the government costs of providing health services. Additionally, sanitation also leads to time and effort losses due to distant or inadequate sanitation facilities, lower product quality resulting from poor water quality, reduced income from tourism (due to high risk of contamination and disease) and clean up costs.

Finally, increases in female literacy (due to increased school attendance where proper sanitation facilities exist) contribute to economic growth. Every dollar spent on improving sanitation generates economic benefits that far exceed the required sanitation investments. *The cost of inaction is enormous.*

Supporting facts and figures:

- For every 10% increase in female literacy (due to increased school attendance where proper sanitation facilities exist), a country's economy can grow by 0.3 percent. (Brocklehurst, 2004)
- According to WHO, achieving the MDG for sanitation would result in \$66 billion gained through time, productivity, averted illness and death and health expenses (Hutton and Haller, 2004).
- WHO estimates that a 10 year increase in average life expectancy at birth translates into a rise of 0.3-0.4% in economic growth per year.
- Return on a \$1 investment in sanitation projects: 9.1\$ (Bartram, Hutton and Haller, 2007)

Contextualize this message in your country using local data such as:

- Female literacy rates (correlated to potential GDP increases);
- Annual health costs correlated to diarrheal disease;
- Estimates of total national investment into sanitation needed to meet MDGs.

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Key Points:

- Lives lost
- Medical costs
- Lost time and productivity
- Lower tourism
- Female literacy and GDP