

# Understanding the Education Sector from the perspectives of WASH

Chat, Listen, and Exchange *webinars are designed to be informative and interactive, as they form a core part of the network's mission to 'foster a global community of practice on WinS to harmonise strategies for supporting governments around the world to plan, finance, implement and monitor integrated, inclusive, and sustainable WinS programmes.'*

## 1.0 Participants:

Over 60 participants from Africa and Asia participated in the first 'Chat, Listen, and Exchange' webinar on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2022. Participants came from Cambodia, Germany, Indonesia, India, Israel, Kenya, Laos PRD, Philippines, Nepal, Netherlands, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, and Zambia.

They represented diverse number of organisations, government departments, local, international and research institutions as well as social enterprises and government. Organisations cited in the chat were: CAWST Canada, Gram Vikas Trust India, Wetlands Work, Ltd. (Cambodia), Pan African Vision for the Environment, GERUWA, Nepal, Sankalpa, CAWST Canada, Save the Children, Cross River State, Sanitation Ambassadors, Lusaka Green Schools Partnership Program, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, and Ecosan Services Foundation.

## 2.0 Key theme of the presentation:

Increasingly NGO's and development partners are using a systems approach for more effective implementation of WASH programmes. However, to work in a system, one needs to understand the system. A good understanding of the Education Sector increases the opportunities for better implementation, resource allocations and more effective advocacy for WinS.

### 2.1 Key takeaway messages:

- **Learn about MoE:** Map which departments are integral to the success of WinS. Also consider teacher training departments, curriculum development even teacher unions for WinS intervention. These departments are often overlooked by WASH actors but are important stakeholders in schools.
- **Promote simple and do-able actions in schools for WinS.** Simple and do-able actions with little external resources have the greatest likelihood of being sustained after the project
- **Develop allies, and do not work alone.** Collaborate with development partners under Education Sector Development funds (GPE, CFS), work under set-guidelines and seek opportunities within these frameworks. E.g., Bilateral or UN *for advocacy for WinS approaches with central government.*
- **Have the best of both worlds in a systems approach** – Investment and advocate downstream and upstream, by aligning NGO activities to local and central planning processes for greater WinS budget allocation to schools and finding WinS champions beyond school directors such as with local government, politicians, and central ministerial departments.

## 3.0 Perspectives from the Four Panel Members summarised

**Le Huong leads the NGO, SNV WASH programme in Laos PRD.** She shared that successful WinS processes are those which bring multiple stakeholders together. In this process, schools and communities find local solutions to local problems. This bring a strong sense of ownership as everyone is involved. In reference to

implementation arrangements, Huong noted that functions for WinS are scattered among different ministries, and departments. This results in WinS being an 'orphan' without a parent ministry. Working with ministries of Education on WinS is easier *said* than done.

**Justina Pereira** works with Ministry of Education in various capacities and is an advocate for WASH in schools. She sees WinS as an integral part of Education and to realise the goal of a healthy disease-free Kenya. Reflecting on the centralised nature of Education, Justina added that policies for WinS are not disseminated to schools. Schools do not have the information to act accordingly. This is compounded by the fact that WinS is not a priority for the ministries of Education and very small budgets are allocated. Justina also shared successes of schools that generated income from soap-making or other activities to maintain WASH facilities.

**Hilda Addah, Co-founder of Beyond the Goal Post and Asase Foundation**, shared that Football for WASH reached all but three regions in Ghana and over 600 schools. Using football was an effective entry point to raise awareness on otherwise *boring* topics of health, sanitation, and hygiene. The success of the interventions went beyond schools and spilled over into the communities. Considering major challenges, Hilda noted that in many cases WASH facilities are not constructed in compliance with ministerial guidelines. She stated that alignment was important, and it was important to establish mechanisms where good practices are fed-into central or ministerial processes. Like many participants, she noted the WinS is woefully underfunded but has seen very good initiatives by schools to generate income locally with plastics recycling and other activities.

**Annemarieke Mooijman** has been working in WASH for three decades in various capacities with multi-lateral, and bilateral agencies, governments, and NGOs. Her proudest moments came recently, when travelling back to Ghana to find the WASH guidelines that she supported to develop in 2014 in a very remote school. In considering both downstream and upstream actions, Annemarieke shared that having partnerships with organisations such as UNICEF, could *open the door* and get audience with ministries of education, as a strategy for small NGOs working in WinS. Another strategy was developing programmes with an area-wide approach. This results in neighbouring communities and schools influencing and advocating for an improved WinS, and strengthening the development of new norms towards WASH.

In closing, **Bella Monse, Advisor for Fit-for Schools, GIZ and the WinS Network**, reiterated the importance of working with Ministry of Education as a lead for WinS. Not only do ministries of Education have a recognized global mandate for WinS, but by working with them the awareness and priority for WinS are raised, as well as their capacities. Through raised awareness in time, there will be increased funding allocation for WinS. She also encourages NGO to implement WinS activities that are simple for schools, as this increases the likelihood of sustainability and adoption by the ministry of education. She encourages development partners to work patiently and systematically, and to remember things can be achieved one step at a time.