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ISSUE '26

WASH in SCHOOLS NETWORK
NEWSLETTER



From Gqeberha to Action

FROM THE SECRETARIAT

How to sustain the momentum after an International Learning Exchange?

This question has guided much of the WinS Network's work in the last six months. Since the last International Learning Exchange (ILE) in Gqeberha (South Africa) in November 2025, what has been most encouraging is that the drive to continue learning and exchanging has come from ministries themselves, sharing challenges, testing solutions and learning from one another. Core group members and partners have also advanced key pieces of work for the WinS Sector.

READ THE OUTCOME DOCUMENT
OF THE LAST AFRICAN Wins ILE:
› www.winsnetwork.org/node/1276



ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

The WinS Network is a global community of practice that brings together governments, development partners, researchers and practitioners committed to strengthening Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in Schools. By fostering collaboration, sharing knowledge and promoting country-led learning, the Network supports stronger systems that enable every child to learn in a safe, healthy and inclusive school environment.

This newsletter is one way we keep that community connected. Each edition shares country experiences, partner initiatives, new resources and practical tools, while highlighting opportunities to engage through webinars, conferences and peer-learning exchanges. Together, these updates help members stay informed, exchange ideas, discover practical solutions and contribute to advancing WASH in Schools around the world.

A QUICK CHALLENGE // DO YOU KNOW...

1. Which country recently collected WASH data from approximately 11,000 schools?
2. Which three topics emerged as shared priorities in both our Anglophone and Francophone focal point discussions?
3. What key message from the Gqeberha ILE continues to shape many of the network's conversations today?

ACROSS THE STORIES IN THIS EDITION ARE THE ANSWERS TO THESE THREE QUESTIONS. SEE IF YOU CAN SPOT THEM AS YOU READ.

NETWORK HIGHLIGHTS

Shared Agenda for Action on Menstrual Health & Hygiene: Building Momentum Together

The Shared Agenda for Action on Menstrual Health & Hygiene is bringing together partners from around the world to define the priorities that will shape global and national action on menstrual health in the years ahead.

Led by UNICEF and the Global Menstrual Collective, the Shared Agenda is being co-created through one of the largest global consultation processes on menstrual health to date. Building on a global Political Economy Analysis (PEA), evidence reviews and country experience, more than 1,600 stakeholders from over 75 countries have contributed through online consultations, hybrid events, in-person workshops, conference sessions and dedicated youth engagement. Many of these discussions have taken place through existing WASH and WinS networks and events, reflecting the strong links between MHH and WASH in Schools and helping ensure the agenda is grounded in country priorities and practical experience.

The next phase will focus on finalising the Shared Agenda, developing an accountability framework and supporting countries to adapt and implement the priorities in their own contexts. UNICEF and partners will continue working with governments and the wider WinS and MHH communities to translate this shared vision into robust policies, programmes and investments that enable every girl and woman to manage menstruation with dignity throughout the life course.

WANT TO GET INVOLVED? // There will be many opportunities to contribute through future consultations, country implementation and knowledge sharing as we work together towards a period-friendly world where no one is held back because they menstruate.



RESOURCES:

- › www.unicef.org/wash/menstrual-hygiene
- › www.globalmenstrualcollective.org
- › www.wateraid.org/washmatters/resources/menstrual-health-hygiene-global-advocacy-pathways

FOLLOW US ON LINKEDIN:

- › www.linkedin.com/company/shared-agenda-for-action-on-menstrual-health-hygiene/home
- STAY IN TOUCH AND CONTACT MARIJE BROEKHUIJSEN:**
- › mbroekhuijsen@unicef.org

Monitoring Moves Centre Stage

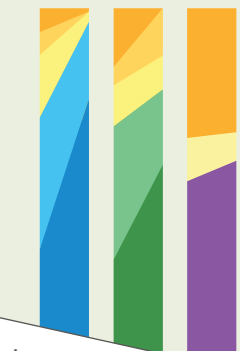
If one topic keeps appearing across the Network's discussions, it is monitoring.

The WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Program (JMP) is advancing work on advanced WinS indicators while countries continue exploring how data can be used not only for reporting, but for planning, prioritisation, investment decisions, motivation, recognition and accountability.

WANT TO DISCUSS FURTHER? // This conversation will continue at both Stockholm World Water Week (Session on Wednesday 26 of August at 16h) and the UNC Water and Health Conference (26 to 30 October 2026) where WinS Network partners, including JMP and UNICEF, will contribute sessions and engage in discussions on monitoring children's and adolescents' rights to WASH in Schools, advanced indicators and evidence for action.

RESOURCES:

- › <https://worldwaterweek.org>
- › <https://waterinstitute.unc.edu/our-work/unc-water-and-health-conference>



LEARN MORE ON:
www.winsnetwork.org



JOIN THE NEXT WEBINAR ON THE 19 OF AUGUST 2026.
DETAILS TO REGISTER:

> www.winsnetwork.org/events/wins-webinar-menstrual-health-schools-lessons-practice

CHAT
LISTEN
EXCHANGE

Keeping Countries Connected

One of the strongest messages coming out of Gqeberha was simple: ministries wanted more opportunities to learn from one another between ILEs.

Over the past few months, the WinS Network convened focal point discussions with Ministries of Education representatives from across Anglophone and Francophone African countries. While held separately to accommodate language needs, the conversations revealed strikingly similar priorities.

Participants highlighted experiences on strengthening national WinS strategies, financing operation and maintenance, improving monitoring systems, promoting behaviour change and building stronger links between education, health, nutrition and water sectors.

Perhaps most encouraging was the appetite for peer learning. Rather than looking only to global guidance, participants repeatedly expressed interest in learning directly from one another's successes and challenges.

Looking ahead, the Network aims to bring both language groups together through a single platform with interpretation support—creating even greater opportunities for collaboration across regions and contexts.

WinS Beyond the Water Sector

WinS continues to find new allies.

From Africa Day of School Feeding in Gaborone (Botswana) to discussions linked to UN Water and the Climate-Resilient WASH Systems working stream. The Network is increasingly engaging with sectors beyond WASH, particularly education, nutrition and health, recognising that schools are where children spend much of their day.

These conversations matter because children do not experience water, sanitation, hygiene, nutrition and health separately—and programmes should not be designed that way either. As one focal point shared during our recent discussions: *"I coordinate school meals and WASH in Schools. It's a combination and I love it."* — Albert Saka, Ministry of Education, Malawi. That spirit of integration is increasingly reflected across countries and partner initiatives alike.

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"I coordinate school meals and WASH in Schools. It's a combination and I love it."

ALBERT SAKA, MINISTRY
OF EDUCATION, MALAWI

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COUNTRY FOCUS

Madagascar

When data starts a conversation.

At the Francophone Country Focal Point meeting in May, Madagascar shared an achievement that immediately captured the attention of participants: a nationwide effort to collect data on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in schools, covering 11,368 primary schools. The scale of this exercise is significant. Just a few years ago, WASH services in schools were not systematically monitored. Today, Madagascar is building a robust evidence base to support planning and improve services for learners across the country.

Most encouraging is how these data are now being used. Rather than serving only as a reporting requirement, they are informing national planning, strengthening decision-making, and supporting both national and global monitoring processes.

On 13 May, the Ministry of National Education participated in the National High-Level Workshop on Data-Driven Planning and Investment, led by the Ministry of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, together with other government ministries and development partners. The workshop brought together WASH service, infrastructure and investment data to identify gaps, review ongoing programmes and financing, and strengthen dialogue on sector priorities and future investments.

The discussions also laid the groundwork for a more coordinated, costed-approach to sector planning, helping ensure that future investments are guided by evidence and aligned with national priorities.

Madagascar's experience reflects a broader shift taking place across the WinS Network: data are no longer collected simply for reporting, but are increasingly being used as a strategic tool for planning, prioritisation and accountability.

Quality data are not the end goal—they are the foundation for better decisions and, ultimately, better WASH services for every learner.

DEEP DIVE

The Message We Keep Hearing

Whether discussing financing, monitoring, menstrual health, school feeding or climate resilience, one message keeps resurfacing across network conversations.

"Progress in WASH in Schools will not be achieved through isolated projects alone."

The Gqeberha ILE highlighted the need for coordinated systems—better governance, effective monitoring, sustainable financing and closer integration with education and health systems.

Six months later, those same themes continue to guide country discussions, partner support and global conversations.

The challenge is no longer knowing what needs to happen.

THE CHALLENGE IS MAKING IT HAPPEN AT SCALE.

LEARN MORE:
› www.winsnetwork.org



Current Areas of Focus

Across the Network, partners continue advancing work that responds to country priorities.

- › The JMP and UNICEF, in collaboration with sector partners, are currently developing a set of priority indicators to measure advanced WASH in Schools service levels, which complements the Basic WinS service level monitoring as part of the SDGs. Strengthening WASH in Schools monitoring supports and encourages meaningful use of data for Government driven WinS programme management.
- › UNICEF and GIZ together with global partners, are working on the revision of the Three-Star Approach, drawing on country experiences and lessons learned since its initial rollout.
- › WHO and UNICEF are developing new resources to support implementation of recently published hand hygiene guidance, including practical applications for school settings.
- › UNICEF and sector partners are exploring approaches to better define and promote safely managed sanitation in schools, helping countries move beyond infrastructure provision towards service delivery.
- › WaterAid is synthesising evidence from 20 countries across Asia and Africa to identify the key behavioural determinants that drive sustained hygiene behaviour change in schools and communities. The findings will be published in a peer-reviewed journal later this year and will provide evidence-based insights to inform the design and implementation of effective hygiene behaviour change interventions in countries.
- › WinS Network, GIZ, and World Food Program are exploring new opportunities to strengthen links between WASH in Schools, school health and school feeding programmes, building on recent discussions in Gaborone and other global platforms.
- › Swiss Water and Sanitation Consortium (SWSC), Eawag and others are finalising a second edition of the Blue Schools Kit, designed to support place-based, experiential learning. Intended to be contextualised by local pedagogy experts per national curricula, its classroom and extracurricular practical learning exercises focus on WASH, Waste, MHH, Gardening and Environmental Conservation.
- › SWSC, Eawag, Northwestern University, University at Buffalo, Splash and others continue to advance work on developing SchoolWISE (WASH Insecurity Experience Scale), helping the sector better understand how learners and teachers experience WASH services, not only whether facilities are available. New sites are being added as part of the ongoing global formative research www.inwise-scales.org.

Together, these initiatives aim to provide countries with practical tools, evidence and guidance that can help accelerate progress while strengthening the systems needed to sustain it.

FIND RELATED RESOURCES:
› www.winsnetwork.org

LOOKING AHEAD



Stockholm World Water Week // August 2026

WinS Network members will contribute a session on monitoring, advanced indicators and evidence for action. Besides the official session Network members will have a chance to meet face-to-face to discuss advanced indicators.

MORE INFORMATION: › <https://worldwaterweek.org/2026/programme>



WinS Network Webinar // "Menstrual Health in Schools" // 19 August 2026, 10:00 to 11:30 CEST / 08:00 to 09:30 UTC

The WinS Network Webinars foster exchanges and learning between Ministries of Education. Based on the priorities identified by MoE WinS focal points for exchange, the WinS Network Secretariat and UNICEF are organising a webinar on Menstrual Health in Schools, with a focus on teacher capacity development, national coordination mechanisms as well as advocacy.

PLEASE USE THIS LINK TO REGISTER: › <https://bit.ly/MHHWebinar-2026>

Other topics that will be covered before the end of 2026 are advanced WinS monitoring as well as integration of WinS with school meals and nutrition programmes.

MORE INFORMATION ON OUR WEBSITE AND MAILING LIST TO FOLLOW: › www.winsnetwork.org/events



UNC Water & Health Conference // October 2026

The conference will continue the conversation on strengthening WASH in Schools systems, with a focus on country experiences and practical approaches. The WinS Network is delighted that a dedicated session has been accepted as part of the programme.

READ MORE ON: › <https://waterinstitute.unc.edu/our-work/unc-water-and-health-conference>



International Learning Exchange 2027

Preparations are beginning for the next ILE in early 2027, with discussions underway regarding a potential Francophone host country in Africa.

KEEP A LOOK OUT ON OUR EVENT PAGE: › www.winsnetwork.org/events





CHALLENGE ANSWER

Which country recently collected WASH data from approximately 11,000 schools?

Madagascar. The exercise is expected to strengthen planning, monitoring and decision-making across the education sector.

Which three topics emerged as a shared priority in both our Anglophone and Francophone focal point discussions? Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH), monitoring, and stronger links between WinS and school meal programmes all emerged as shared priorities.

What key message from the Gqeberha ILE continues to shape the Network's work?

The need to move from projects to resilient systems. Across discussions on governance, financing, monitoring and integration, ministries continue to emphasise sustainable approaches that can deliver lasting improvements for learners.

Until next semester—and thank you for being part of the WinS Network. 💧



STAY ENGAGED // The most valuable resource in the WinS Network remains the experiences, ideas and lessons shared by its partners and members.

// Have a country story, publication, innovation or event worth sharing?

Please contact: winsnetwork@giz.de

VISIT THE WINS NETWORK WEBSITE TO
EXPLORE RESOURCES, ACCESS WEBINAR
RECORDINGS, DISCOVER UPCOMING EVENTS
AND CONNECT WITH PEERS.

www.winsnetwork.org

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