

# WaterAid school WASH research: Nepal country report



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Report prepared for WaterAid by Jacques-Edouard Tiberghien,  
Partnerships in Practice

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**Cover image:** Som and Nirmal, looking at the wall painting illustrations about MHM in their school toilet. Sirthauli, Sindhuli, Nepal, April 2016. WaterAid/ Mani Karmacharya.

## List of abbreviations

CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DEO	District Education Office
DFID	Department for International Development
DOE	Department of Education
DOHS	Department of Health Services
D-WASH-CC	District Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Coordination Committee
DWSS	Department of Water Supply and Sanitation
FEDWASUN	Federation of Water and Sanitation Users, Nepal
INGO	international non-government organisation
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MHM	Menstrual Hygiene Management
MoHP	Ministry of Health and Population
NEWAH	Nepal Water for Health
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
ODF	Open Defecation-Free
RP	Resource Person (from resource centre)
RWH	Rain Water Harvesting
SDA	Small Doable Action
SLTS	School-Led Total Sanitation
SSDP	School Strategic Development Plan
SSHE	School Sanitation Hygiene Education
SSRP	School Sector Reform Plan
VDC	Village Development Committee
WSSMP	Water Supply and Sanitation Masterplan

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## Executive summary

### 1. Enabling

#### 1.1. Policies

Nepal's WASH in Schools (WinS) policy framework is comprehensive and appropriate to the local context, but the application of its policies, however, is not consistent. The Department of Education (DoE) tends to focus heavily on hardware (for example, taps, toilets) and stakeholders point to a lack of guidance on how to operationalise WinS policies. There is strong leadership from the DoE, supported by key national stakeholders.

Coordination of efforts towards WASH in Schools needs strengthening at all levels: at central level, the WASH Thematic Group needs greater engagement of the Department of Water Supply and Sanitation (DWSS) and Department of Health Services (DoHS). At district level, the District WASH Coordination Committees (D-WASH-CC) established through the water and sanitation supply masterplan are consistently described as a very useful coordination platform. However, the engagement of the District Education Office (DEO) is generally very low, and in the absence of non-governmental organisation (NGO) support, D-WASH-CC tend to operate as very loose networks. In the field, duplicated efforts by government and NGOs are common, as are the lost opportunities for synergies. At local level, access to water is often the first obstacle schools face, and overcoming this typically requires an effective water-sharing arrangement between schools and community water users' committees. Likewise, a more active engagement of the DoHS is much needed, notably through an effective implementation of the school health programme by health posts.

National WinS standards are generally good and are gradually improving through practice-policy linkages. Their implementation is not straightforward, however, because of lack of awareness and insufficient capacities at district and local level. Most of the 'institutional gears' appear to be well in place (i.e. policy documents, an institutional framework, leadership, coordination mechanisms, standards) and upcoming national WinS guidelines will undoubtedly simplify and bring greater internal consistency to the theoretical framework of how WinS work should be dealt with at all levels. Yet stakeholders note a critical lack of in-built incentives from top to bottom, and a lack of effective interplay between these institutional gears. Local-level leadership needs to be built.

#### 1.2. Planning

Quantitatively, the targets set at national level are unrealistic considering low levels of investment in the sector, its limited capacity of absorption, and the operation and maintenance (O&M) challenges which chronically weaken the impact of interventions. The WinS sector can set ambitious targets, but its efforts need greater alignment with the open-defecation-free (ODF) and total sanitation movements.

Until very recently, official targets neglected the significant needs schools to simply rehabilitate their

"We are supposedly an open-defecation-free village development committee...at least it has been declared so, but I live just opposite the school and there are school boys urinating and defecating on my yard across the road. If the toilets of the schools are not clean, they will not use them." Januka Pudasaini, SMC member, Shree Baijivan Jyoti Secondary school, Mandichora.

toilets, as opposed to build new facilities. Some targets need to be prioritized over others, implying a sequencing of investments in schools. A more virtuous approach is required, whereby new toilets are granted on merit and built in needy schools demonstrating a capacity to maintain their own facilities.

At district level, quotas for toilet construction are reportedly excessively ambitious due to inadequate funding per facility, lack of human resources, and limited logistical support for monitoring and evaluation (M&E). At school level, school improvement plans are merely viewed as a formality, where WinS is rarely prioritised. A change in the perception of school WASH plans is needed. The influential resource persons from resource centres are natural candidates to catalyse such a shift in the mind-set of school management committees (SMCs) and to endorse the role of a WinS champion.

Significant progress on WinS requires greater stakeholder accountability, which itself implies a regular, reliable and transparent institutionalised monitoring system. The DoE is striving to make progress but the task is arduous. At national level, the Education Monitoring Information System (EMIS) currently records the physical presence of WinS facilities but not their functionality. The DoE is planning to introduce two or three new indicators (sufficient water supply available in girls' toilets, a handwashing station with soap, and possibly rainwater harvesting (RWH) in new buildings), which may not be reflected immediately in bi-annual "flash reports". WinS stakeholders face a big constraint: the DoE seeks to include fewer indicators in the EMIS, and WinS is not a prioritised area. Regarding the curriculum, the material and didactic approaches currently used do not foster the development of the life skills students need to acquire.

To increase DEO engagement at district level, its WinS performance needs to be monitored using new key performance indicators (KPIs). This implies integrating WinS indicators in the monitoring checklists of school supervisors and resource persons. The joint monitoring carried out by D-WASH-CC members is cited as a good practice. Self-monitoring of WinS by students, SMCs and the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) is also recommended, not only to support monitoring efforts but also from a school/community accountability and leadership perspective.

Sustaining (high-quality) monitoring is a major concern, and lies at the heart of WinS sustainability. The institutionalisation and effective enforcement of such a monitoring system might take several years, and in the meantime a temporary system of incentives may be needed. The idea of inter-school competitions as a temporary monitoring and incentive system is an appropriate option to explore.

"The motivation of the headteacher, or other teachers but especially the headteacher, is what matters. If the head teacher is not motivated, you can bring a box of soap bars in his office, but they won't be used. If there is motivation, they will find the way to make things work." Jeewan Sherchan, WASH Coordinator, DFID (stationed at DoE).

"The headteacher has in fact a huge influence in decision making, and it is important to manage to create genuine community demand." Ang Pasang Sherpa, Senior program officer JICA.

"The RP [resource person] from the resource centre is like a bridge for the headteacher. The headteacher needs the RP to communicate with the DEO. [...] the RP instructs, oversees, reports back to the DEO...it is an important person." Chet Nath Sharma, DoE.



### 1.3. Budget

The annual DoE budget for WinS is steadily increasing but remains highly insufficient. Budget planning appears to be a far too a rigid process and is unresponsive to the actual needs of schools. On-going improvements, such as the introduction of new budget lines, are introducing some flexibility, but significant progress implies a marked leap forward in transparency throughout the processes of needs assessments, budget planning and allocation.

At district level, the pooling of resources from different departments (DoE, DWSS and the Department of Local Infrastructure Development and Agricultural Roads – DOLIDAR) and the creation of synergies is made difficult by the lack of coordination among stakeholders at D-WASH-CC level, the low engagement of DEO, and divergence in the criteria used by DWSS and DoE to determine their priority areas of intervention. This divergence reflects a lack of harmonisation among organisational goals and targets. The reluctance by district level DoE and DWSS representatives and Local Development Officers to share their organisational practices, internal dynamics and performance is most likely a more profound obstacle to overcome.

At school level, the community contribution required for building WinS hardware (e.g. toilets) constitutes a major hindrance. A merit-based approach could be used in place of (or as a complement to less demanding) community contribution schemes. This would foster the development of a sense of ownership of the facilities among school and community stakeholders and encourage proper O&M.

## 2. Developing

### 2.1. Access

Water supply is the top priority for WinS. But in Nepal the quality and quantity of water is often inadequate. Poor access to water can result from natural scarcity and/or an unfavourable school location (remote, hilltop); poor-performing community water users committees; and/or their reluctance to share water. Facilitating formal and workable (technical and sometimes political) arrangements between SMCs and water users' committees is an objective which should figure in all project log-frames.

In 2011, the DoE estimated that 80% of Nepal's schools had at least one toilet. Putting emphasis on environmental sanitation (rather than solely focus on WASH) and addressing solid waste management, thereby improving the overall school environment, cleanliness and safety, appears to be useful to increase teachers' buy-in. Approximately half of all schools have permanent hand-washing sinks but they are frequently leaking and in need of repair. Of these, only 28% are child friendly, meeting minimum national standards.



**Figure 1: Latrine blocks at Kaiika lower secondary school, Padam Pokhari, Makwanpur district. Credit: Jacques Edouard-Tiberghien.**

Since the completion of school fencing wall, WinS facilities are less exposed to theft and vandalism, which led to the deterioration of a first latrine block, built by the government. The latter is now decommissioned (pictured).

The second block, more recently built and funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), comprises two cubicles, with doors equipped with proper locks and is well used and maintained.

## 2.2. Equity

Authorities' high-level commitment to quality education with a focus on adolescent girls is leading to policy impetus and tangible improvements on the ground: the coverage of separated toilets for girls stands at 65% and is rising. Menstrual hygiene management (MHM) features are now getting institutionalised in designs, and prioritised in budget and monitoring. These hardware-focused efforts should be accompanied by activities leading to a change in attitude and behaviour by students. Much lower emphasis is put on responding to the specific needs of persons with physical disabilities. Ensuring a more equitable provision of WinS services throughout Nepal regardless of community location, ethnic belonging and political influences requires greater transparency in WinS baselines, requests and budget allocation.

## 2.3. Capacity

The ongoing ODF movement across Nepal is probably the best vehicle for the WinS sector to rapidly scale-up its efforts. It appears relevant to prioritise WinS investment in districts that are committed to ODF and who are on their way to total sanitation status. Triggering a positive community pressure on schools to make progress on WinS is essential, but boosting the engagement of community members, PTAs and SMCs requires greater resources and a more strategic plan.

Policy documents and national targets reflect a strong priority placed by the government on hygiene education. This commitment needs to be reflected in plans, guidelines and budgets. Likewise, line ministries (DWSS, DoE, DoHS) need to be engaged much more actively from top to bottom. At local level, the participation of health post workers in WinS work needs to be stimulated. Media can support WinS advocacy efforts and help hold duty bearers accountable.

“Much can be achieved in districts through SLTS with the support of CSOs such as FEDWASUN and media by demanding government transparency and accountability... ODF was impossible to envision 10-15 years ago, and now it has become a social movement streamlined by the government.”

Jeewan Sherchan, WASH Coordinator, DFID (stationed at DoE).



The participation of students in WinS O&M activities is generally low and difficult to sustain. Whilst Nepal has a strong tradition of children-centred approaches, mechanisms are required to ensure that student annual turnover and the possible waning of motivation amongst pupils does not affect the continuity of student-led WinS activities. Narrowing the scope of Child Clubs to WASH activities only usually leads to a rapid decline in the motivation of students and is likely to reduce buy-in from teachers, who prefer to see the potential of these clubs expand beyond WASH.



J-E Tiberghien

**Students and PTA members from Shree Baijivan Jyoti Secondary school, Mandichora, Makwanpur.**

The students cannot remember the activities of the Child Club created during the last WinS intervention. Girls' toilets are far cleaner than the boys' toilets because the girls fetch water from the nearby tap to clean their toilet after each use. Teenage boys are said to sneak into the school when it is closed and mess up the boys' toilets. The head teacher also underlines that girls' toilets are far newer and better designed.

### 3. Sustaining

The various inputs needed to ensure proper O&M of WinS facilities are generally available throughout the country. However, in some areas, theft and vandalism defeat the goodwill of SMCs to maintain WinS facilities. The DoE recently announced the creation of a new budget line earmarked for O&M expenses. An estimated 50% of schools allocate resources to WinS O&M, for which they often draw on the 'stationery and miscellaneous' budget line. But schools also consider additional mechanisms to mobilise resources.

SMCs (including head teachers and their secretaries) are responsible for organising the O&M of WinS facilities, procuring inputs needed and developing and enforcing an effective O&M plan. PTA and SMC members generally lack awareness of WASH issues. In each school, SMCs can do for WASH in Schools what village development committee (VDC) secretaries did during the ODF movement – become champions and drivers of the cause. SMCs sometimes need to influence head teachers, who often have a stronghold on decision making and budget prioritisation. Protecting WinS from political rivalries at SMC level is a prerequisite. Indeed, political parties generally have an influence in schools through affiliated teachers and members of the SMC. They can be leveraged as a useful force to champion WinS provided they can be brought to consider WinS as a 'national cause' requiring their full support.

SMCs generally rely on helpers to clean the toilets but the consistency and quality of this cleaning is often insufficient. The use of toilets is often mainly dependent on their level of cleanliness, but some design features, such as lighting, are also critical. In schools lacking a strong and committed SMC, achieving good O&M of WinS facilities is extremely difficult unless the DoE prioritises it. Resource persons, mandated to provide guidance and oversight to schools have a key role to play to foster good O&M, for which they need to receive clear instructions from the top, as well as WASH training, and a clear rationale

linking their new WinS responsibilities to their job description.

Very low levels of safe health practices, such as handwashing with soap and the adequate storage and handling of safe water, exist among school children. The Three Star approach promoted by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and German development organisation GiZ appears relevant to boost efforts at this level. However, the success of such a certification scheme depend on a rigorous monitoring system, which implies the engagement of DoE representatives from top to bottom. In particular, support from the resource persons, school supervisors, and DEOs is essential.



**Students washing and drinking from the water tank at Kaiika lower secondary school, Padam Pokhari, Makwanpur district.**

A year ago, children had to fetch water from neighbouring ponds. The connection of the school to the community gravity water networks has radically improved access to water, now available in sufficient quantity and of a better quality (yet to be monitored). A female teacher reports that absenteeism resulting from the lack of appropriate facilities to manage menstrual hygiene has declined significantly. However, the original metal taps have been stolen and partly replaced by plastic taps, which are less robust and tend to leak.

## 1. Background

The state of water supply, sanitation and hygiene facilities in schools in Nepal leaves much to be desired. Many schools have three or four generations of poorly constructed toilets or latrines which have not been cared for over the years (for example, minor repairs to taps or rainwater gutters have not been made), with the result that they are now disused. Random visits to schools in many countries mean that the poor state of sanitation and hygiene is understood, but national governments – and civil society in general – often fail to take action. This is despite the problem being apparently one with simple solutions.

Ensuring that such facilities and services are put in place requires an enabling environment consisting of strong and clear policies, effective public planning procedures and adequate budgets. The development of services and facilities requires a capacity, expertise and commitment on the part of those undertaking implementation to provide high quality and equitable access for all pupils, including those with physical or other disabilities. Sustaining the functioning and performance of services – arguably the most challenging of all aspects – requires management commitment and capacity, dedicated funds, upkeep and maintenance skills and effective supply chains for goods and services.

In view of its long-running concern about the state of WASH in schools, and against a background of extensive programmatic and policy work on the topic in many countries, in 2015 WaterAid undertook a programme of research. This began with a review of academic literature and other materials and research related to the sector and grey literature, together with a set of key informant interviews, which resulted in the *School WASH Research and Advocacy Programme – Work Package 1 Desk Review* of July 2015.

The second stage of the research, undertaken in July 2015, involved hiring two independent consultants, who, together with WaterAid research and regional staff, designed a field research programme. Jacques-Edouard Tiberghien was recruited to undertake four country case studies in south Asia (Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan) and Rose Alabaster to carry out five country case studies in East Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda).

The third stage of the research led to the completion of nine country case studies of WaterAid's country programmes (CPs) in the two regions. This document is one of those case studies. Work continues within WaterAid's regional teams and country programmes to summarise, synthesise, learn from and design better programmatic and policy actions based on these reports.

## 2. WaterAid context

WaterAid's Global Strategy 2015-2020, *Everyone, Everywhere 2030*, draws attention to the needless deaths of 500,000 children annually from diseases caused by a lack of safe water, sanitation and hygiene. It points out the impact on school completion rates of girls whose schools lack adequate toilets. The strategy draws attention to WaterAid's programmatic work in delivering improved WASH services to many millions of people; and it refers to the influence of its evidence-based policy and campaigns work in reaching many millions more.

WaterAid's global aims – addressing inequality of access, strengthening sustainable services, integrating WASH with other essential areas of sustainable development, and improving hygiene behaviour – are highly relevant to a focus on enabling, developing and sustaining WASH services in schools. The strategy clearly highlights the responsibility of national governments to create environments within which public and private sector entities and civil society can bring about change. WaterAid looks for effective leadership, active communities, a commitment to equality, the systems necessary for sustainability, and the integration of key development sectors.

This report, together with the eight others that accompany it, sets out analysis and evidence which is highly pertinent to WaterAid's country programmes, regional efforts and global strategy. It is hoped too that the material presented here may be of value to other organisations struggling to support national and local governments, communities and schools in their efforts to improve WASH services.

### 3. Country context

#### 3.1. Geographic, demographic and socio-economic profile

Occupying a strategic location between India and China, Nepal is a landlocked country with 31.5 million people and a huge geographic diversity, ranging from the flat river plain of the Ganges in the south to the Himalayas in the north. Nepal's population is young (53% of inhabitants are under the age of 24 years) and growing at an annual rate of 1.8%.<sup>1</sup> It is also very rural – just 18.6% of the population lives in urban areas.

Nepal is among the poorest and least developed countries in the world. About 25% of the population lives below the poverty line. The country depends heavily on remittances from abroad (representing up to 25% of GDP). Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy, providing a livelihood for more than 70% of the population and accounting for over one-third of GDP. Industrial activity mainly involves the processing of agricultural products. Nepal has considerable scope for exploiting its potential in hydropower, but political uncertainty and a difficult business climate have hampered foreign investment.

Natural disasters such as floods, landslides and soil erosion are increasingly recurrent and damaging, and are indicative of the negative effects of climate change, which is also causing erratic rain and loss of food production in a country that is already suffering food shortages. On April 25 2015, a 7.8-magnitude earthquake struck the country. The Nepal Government declared 14 out of the 75 districts as crisis-hit and another 17 districts badly affected.

#### 3.2. Political and administrative context

On May 28 2008 Nepal made the transition from constitutional monarchy to republic. The country's complex and feudal political scene means that no government or coalition has yet been able to provide adequate law and order in the country, and despite the notion of 'equality before the law', the caste system is still a fact of daily life. Numerous castes, political parties and ethnic groups (traditionally repressed) are agitating for specific demands or conditions which cannot coexist, creating a headache for the government and a culture of impunity, inaction and harassment in what is already a severely underdeveloped, poverty-stricken and disaster prone country. Nepal has not had local



government elections for the past 12 years, which has a bearing on the perceived legitimacy and authority of the non-elected local development officer.

Since the April 2015 earthquake, development gains are set to unravel due to increasing political turmoil and in spite of heavy international aid and outpouring of communities helping one another.<sup>2</sup> On September 20 2015, a new constitution was promulgated, which therefore completes the political process initiated in 2008 and represents a key step toward continuing national reconciliation, restoring political stability and returning to the path of development. This new constitution recognises that every citizen has the right to access to clean drinking water and sanitation.

Administratively the country is divided into five development regions, 14 zones, 75 districts, 3,915 VDCs, five metropolitan areas (Kathmandu, the capital city and Biratnagar, Pokhara, Lalitpur and Birganj) and 191 municipalities (VDCs are currently being restructured into municipalities).<sup>3</sup>

### 3.3. WASH sector

In 2013, the government announced that the MDG goals for both water and sanitation had been met. Water coverage stands at 83.59% and sanitation stands at 70.28% in mid-2014. These coverage figures mask crucial problems inherent to the water sector in Nepal. There are problems related to water quality, functionality of water schemes, water governance and reliable distribution of safe and affordable drinking water to the voiceless and the marginalised people who live in the remote hills and villages, and in neglected urban social clusters.<sup>4</sup>

The DoE and the DWSS have historically led WASH in school efforts with significant support from UNICEF.<sup>a</sup> Both the school sanitation and hygiene education (SSHE) and school-led total sanitation (SLTS) approaches introduced in Nepal in 2000 and 2006 respectively have institutionalised school as the centre of learning and motivation for sustained sanitation and hygiene behaviours. The Rural Water Supply and Sanitation National Policy and Strategy and Sectoral Strategic Action Plan 2004 have also recognized the role of schools in community sensitisation and behavioural promotion. More recently, the Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan 2011 spelled out the key role of school, students and school families to achieve open-defecation-free (ODF) status. Importantly, the School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP) 2009-15 includes WASH criteria amongst the basic requirements imposed on all schools. The National Framework of Child Friendly School 2010 (NFCFS) has defined these WASH requirements more precisely.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> The Ministry of Population and Health has been involved too, notably through the School Health and Nutrition Programme, but comparatively to a much lesser extent than DWSS and DoE.

## 4. Research aims and objectives

The aim of the research is to **set out a systematic process by which WaterAid can design and improve its strategies and approaches for school WASH.**

The objectives of the research are as follows:

1. Review and deepen existing school WASH bottleneck analyses using bottleneck analyses tools (BATs) or in the case of countries with no such analysis, undertake them. Focus on detailed description of BAT components and explanation of underlying causes of strengths and weaknesses. Explicitly include review of country monitoring systems and indicators.
2. Analyse WaterAid country programme activities, and as far as possible the work of other organisations, and the extent to which they address school WASH needs and weaknesses.
3. In the course of the work, highlight examples of good practice and promising innovations. Also identify unsuccessful approaches that should be avoided in the interventions of WaterAid and/or other organisations.
4. Recommend modifications to existing WaterAid school WASH strategies and approaches, based on analyses undertaken and clearly articulated reasoning harmonised across the two study regions.
5. Recommend ways to strengthen the existing BAT and make recommendations relevant to the work.

## 5. Methodology

### 5.1. Analytical framework

A generic analytical framework has been prepared by Rose Alabaster, Richard Carter and Jacques-Edouard Tiberghien to guide the process of data collection (documentation review, interviews, workshops, observations) and analysis. It largely builds upon UNICEF's WinS-BAT (school WASH bottleneck analysis tool), which aims to support systems-level discussions and planning to improve the effectiveness of WinS interventions in schools in low-income countries. This tool consists of three components (enabling, developing and sustaining); nine subcomponents<sup>b</sup> and 27 factors, and is typically used to help identify and prioritise barriers to scalable, equitable and sustainable WinS services.<sup>6</sup>

The analytical framework developed is conveniently split into two components:

1. Component A: a table comprising sets of themes and questions to gain an in-depth understanding of the bottlenecks of the WinS sector at national level.
2. Component B: this allows an assessment of the relevance and effectiveness of the strategy and approaches of WaterAid (and other iNGOs and donors), both from the perspective of the bottlenecks identified through Component A and from the perspective of key generic criteria.

<sup>b</sup> Enabling (policy, planning, budget); Developing (access, equity, capacity); Sustaining (O&M inputs, maintenance, use).



Components A and B were used together, component A informing most of the conversation held during the meetings, focus group discussions and workshops held during the country visits; while component B provided additional guidance for meetings held with WaterAid Nepal and its partners. Meetings were preceded by a careful examination by the consultant of the most relevant themes to address and specific issues to discuss. The relatively late planning of the mission left little time for WaterAid Nepal to jointly reflect on which specific themes of the analytical framework to emphasise, prior to the country visit. Some time was allocated for discussion of this aspect on the first day of the visit, following an introduction to the research and a presentation of the analytical framework. The latter was found to be appropriate in its generic form and did not require modifications.

## 5.2. Data collection and analysis

### 5.2.1. Data sources

As noted in the Terms of Reference, the research was undertaken through a combination of country-level document reviews, key informant and group interviews, stakeholder workshops, and field visits. The list of documents consulted is presented in Annex F.

### 5.2.2. Research into use (RIU)

In order to embrace RIU principles, emphasis was put on engaging WaterAid Nepal as much as possible in the design of the research protocol and in the data collection and analysis processes. WaterAid Nepal welcomed this research as it fitted well into the ongoing work of the WinS Thematic Working Group around the drafting of National WinS Guidelines. WaterAid Nepal saw the project as both a potentially useful input into the development of the guidelines and an opportunity to engage sector stakeholders in reflecting upon key issues affecting WinS programming. As a result, the two workshops organised at national and district level, as well as the two feedback meetings held (with all national stakeholders, and then exclusively with WaterAid Nepal and partners) on the last day of the visit, were designed to trigger critical inputs from participants.

The research was presented as an opportunity to expose and increase the sector's shared understanding of the multiple WinS accountability<sup>c</sup> and political economy<sup>d7</sup> issues lying below the surface of WinS bottlenecks and rarely mentioned in reports nor clearly reflected in project and programme proposals, but which everyone confronting the reality of WinS work ends up facing. The consultant and WaterAid Nepal insisted that, from this perspective, the findings of the research were meant to benefit the whole sector, shedding more light on strategic issues to address as a priority. The two stakeholder feedback

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<sup>c</sup> The concept of accountability is broadly defined and based the framework proposed by Accountability.org, which encompasses the following dimensions: compliance (the duty to comply with agreed standards), transparency (the duty to account) and responsiveness (the responsibility for acts and omissions).

<sup>d</sup> In this report, political economy drivers refer to: i) the interests and incentives facing different groups in society (and particularly political elites), and how these generate particular policy outcomes that may encourage or hinder development; ii) the role that formal institutions (e.g. rule of law, elections) and informal social, political and cultural norms play in shaping human interaction and political and economic competition; iii) the impact of values and ideas, including political ideologies, religion and cultural beliefs, on political behaviour and public policy (ODI 2009).

meetings held on the last day of the country visit allowed for validating preliminary findings. Notably, it helped confirm the relevance of the general recommendations formulated for the sector and the more specific ones for WaterAid Nepal and its NGO partners.

### 5.2.3. Data collation

Data collected during the document review was coded against the different themes (component, sub-components and factors) of the WinS-BAT and collated in an Excel spreadsheet (reproduced on a table included in the inception report), mirroring the analytical framework. This well-structured background information for the research was used to inform the group work organised during the national-level workshop. Time constraints did not allow the consultant to code the data collected during interview, focus group discussions, and workshops in the same table.

### 5.2.4. Interview-guiding questionnaires

The analytical framework comprises numerous questions and associated lines of inquiry facilitating the exploration of potential accountability and political economy drivers affecting each factor/theme. A small set of themes were addressed during conversations with each informant. The preparation of each meeting, focus group discussion, and site visit thus involved the selection of a set of key relevant questions. Given the variety of informants to meet and the need to keep the evaluation responsive to important issues as they arose (calling for exploration at greater depth), such ‘questionnaires’ – sets of questions guiding the semi-structured conversations held with stakeholders – were prepared in-country the day before or a few hours prior to the meetings.

## 5.3. Process

The preparation phase saw the author review the documentation, collate relevant information in a bespoke table (as described in section 5.2.3), and design a tentative schedule for the country visit with the two focal persons in WaterAid Nepal. An inception report combining a draft desk report and the research protocol was prepared and shared with the team leader, WaterAid Nepal and WaterAid UK.

The two-week country visit (31 August 2015 to 11 September 2015) started with an introduction of the research project to the WaterAid Nepal team, followed by exchanges on the methodology, planning and logistics. On day two and three the author gathered relevant data through eight one-to-one meetings and focus group discussions held with national stakeholders in Kathmandu. These conversations – as well as the data collated prior to the visit – informed an one-day national workshop held on day 4 and attended by circa 25 participants. A three-step group work approach facilitated by the author and WaterAid Nepal colleagues led to the familiarisation of the group with the WinS-BAT, the joint identification of key WinS bottlenecks and discussion around some of their underlying causes.

The following days saw the author, accompanied by WaterAid Nepal and Nepal Water for Health (NEWAH) staff members, continue the data collection process in Makwanpur: two schools were visited and numerous meetings were held with school, community and district level stakeholders. A one-day district workshop was organised by NEWAH at the beginning of the second week. Attended by about 30 participants, it led to a comparison of the views of different stakeholder groups (e.g. SMCs, head teachers, district officials, NGOs) on the

following questions: what are WinS objectives? Who are the WinS stakeholders? What are their respective roles and responsibilities? Where are accountability issues critical? The groups were then reshuffled, and participants examined the reasons behind such accountability issues and possible solutions to address them.

Back in Kathmandu valley, the author visited another school, holding extra meetings with school stakeholders and interviewing Environment and Public Health Organisation (ENPHO) representatives. A stakeholder feedback meeting was held on the last day of the visit and attended by most of the persons who had participated in the national workshop. The preliminary findings and recommendations were presented and discussed. The conversations also led to new insights.

#### 5.4. Limitations

A first observation worth mentioning is that Nepal was the first country where the analytical framework was being tested. The consultant became very familiar with it only by applying it, and practice revealed the relatively significant relevance/weight of the **Enabling** component of the WinS-BAT for the research, compared to the **Developing** and **Sustaining** components. Accordingly, the consultant realised the need to adjust the periods of time allocated to group work on each of these three components during the national workshop (on the fourth day of the visit).

There is very little experience of working with the WinS-BAT in Nepal – only a few people have been directly exposed to it through an online learning exercise recently organised by UNICEF. Critically exploring the accountability and political economy drivers of WinS bottlenecks with participants mostly unfamiliar with this tool can be challenging in the sense that unavoidably, they will be inclined to spend time reflecting upon descriptive aspects of the component at the expense of a more in-depth analysis. Providing descriptive background information only partially addresses this issue. To promote conversations (during one-to-one meetings, focus group discussions, workshops) exploring the nature of the underlying drivers, the number of topics to explore was reduced.

The current social and political context of Nepal constrained the research, although not critically. Indeed, at the time of the visit, a large part of the territory was experiencing political and social instability, which narrowed down the areas of intervention that the research team could visit. The post-April 2015 earthquake context also meant that the WASH organisations were still very busy coordinating action at national level and implementing activities on the ground. As a result, some key experts could not attend the national workshop and stakeholder feedback meeting. They were nonetheless represented by colleagues and the attendance to workshops was very good. On 4 September 2015, planned visit to schools in Kathmandu were cancelled due to exams. Two head teachers were invited to the national workshop held the day before.

#### 5.5. Recommendations for the use of the WinS-BAT

The research indicates that the WinS-BAT is an appropriate tool to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the subsector in a comprehensive and very systematic way. Whereas it is often used productively in a rather descriptive way to establish the state of things, it becomes even more valuable for sector stakeholders when additional lines of enquiry are made into the reasons why progress or stagnation is observed on one subcomponent or

another. During the course of this research, conversations framed by the WinS-BAT and exploring underlying political economy and accountability drivers have proved very interesting for all parties, whether in the context of one-to-one meetings, focus groups discussions or workshops. This sort of enquiry is clearly valued and stakeholders recognise that further exploiting the potential of the WinS-BAT in this way responds to current needs.

Such use of the WinS-BAT can be time-consuming. A description of the subcomponent often needs to precede analysis of the underlying drivers. Therefore, in the context of meetings or workshops, it is highly recommended to focus on a limited number of subcomponents and address them in depth. Such an enhanced WinS-BAT can advantageously build on a preliminary stakeholder mapping and power analysis.

## 6. Findings

### 6.1. Enabling

#### 6.1.1. Policies

##### a) Policy documents

Nepal has a long and successful track record in conducting WinS work, often pioneering new approaches. The shift from hardware-focused approaches in the late 1980s to initiatives putting greater emphasis on changing attitudes and behaviour in students and teachers in the early 1990s was assessed by the government and UNICEF, and led to the formulation of the School Sanitation and Hygiene Education (SSHE) framework in 1997, officially adopted in 2000. In the following years, policy documents produced by various ministries (see Annex E) confirmed the government's commitment to make progress on WinS. The National School Health and Nutrition Strategy, based on the FRESH (Focusing Resources on Effective School Health) approach, was endorsed by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) in 2006. The adoption of school-led total sanitation (SLTS) in 2005 and its integration in the Water Supply and Sanitation Master Plan (WSSMP) in 2008 are described as key milestones by local experts, who note that WinS is becoming increasingly popular and is rising up the political agenda. **According to the stakeholders consulted, the Nepalese WinS policy framework is strong. It is indeed comprehensive and appropriate to the local context.**

**The application of these policies, however, is not very consistent.** Organisations implementing WinS activities in Nepal often blend some of the five pillars recommended in the policies<sup>e</sup> with their own components, reflecting specific agendas. Experimenting with new approaches is generally regarded as positive, yet several informants stress that organisations piloting new should share their learning in the interests of being able to scale up these approaches where successful.

<sup>e</sup> Student orientation; focal teacher activating child club; WinS activities in SMC school improvement plans; MHM activities; O&M plan.

**The DoE still tends to focus heavily on hardware despite the clear and consistent promotion of integrated ‘hardware plus software’ approaches in policy documents.** Informants agree that the application at local level of policies formulated at national level is hindered by insufficient communication and orientation towards DEOs. More generally, stakeholders point to **a lack of guidance on how to operationalise these WinS policies.** National WinS guidelines are currently under development, which should directly bridge this gap, harmonise the efforts of partners and allow a scaling-up of WinS efforts.<sup>f</sup>

## b) Leadership, coordination, role and responsibilities

**There is good leadership at national level.** Whilst the 1990s saw DWSS take the lead on WinS work, the DoE has been taking increasing ownership of the issue and is now leading the sector’s efforts with UNICEF support. The active engagement of DoE is tangible on many fronts (e.g. policy, budget, internal structure). Key national stakeholders support this leadership. The engagement of the MoHP is mainly taking place through the joint MoE-MOPH School Health and Nutrition Strategy and efforts were particularly visible in 2008-2012, through the School Health and Nutrition project and the activity of the related School Health and Nutrition network.

### Coordination of WinS efforts needs strengthening at all levels:

- **At central level,** the WASH thematic group established by the DoE in 2010 needs greater engagement of DWSS and DoHS. The stakeholder feedback meeting provided an opportunity for national stakeholders to stress that the MoHP should be willing to play more of a leadership role in WinS, which they see as included in their mandate.<sup>9</sup>
- **WinS interventions implemented in one or several districts** often suffer a lack of coordination among partners. This leads to duplication of efforts and lost opportunities for synergies. For instance, the large DoE-led hardware-only interventions would have greatly benefitted from the support of partners on complementary software activities. Likewise, the impact of WaterAid Nepal WinS advocacy interventions would increase with DoE support on hardware component, if only for the provision of handwashing stations allowing schools to start implementing their WASH plan.
- **At district level,** the district WASH coordination committees (D-WASH-CC) established through WSSMP are consistently described as very useful coordination platforms, and support from NGOs has markedly increased their functionality. In the absence of projects, incentives are lacking to motivate coordination and mechanisms are lacking to activate the local potential for synergies. DEO officers are often very busy and give a low priority to WASH issues, meaning their engagement in these platforms is generally regarded as very low – their participation in the D-WASH-CC meetings therefore must

<sup>f</sup> The National WinS Guidelines are meant to respond to: i) a lack of common understanding among government agencies and stakeholders for basic WASH facilities, especially in integrating hardware and software aspects of WASH; ii) harmonising practices and standards among development partners, I/NGOs and stakeholders generally to avoid divergent approaches; iii) ensuring that behavioural change is given sufficient emphasis; iv) ensuring uniformity, quality and standards in programme processes, technological inputs, behavioural change/build up, monitoring and outputs of the overall intervention of WASH in school to mainstream school WASH programmes with the government’s leadership, and to synergize stakeholders’ efforts (Shakya, 2015).

<sup>9</sup> The MoHP was not represented in the national workshop nor in the stakeholder feedback meeting. This reflects their currently low level of engagement on WinS at central level.



be more consistent and proactive. There is a need to incentivise the engagement of DEO officers, school supervisors, and resource persons in resource centres, possibly through the use of WinS-related key performance indicators (KPI). Other incentive mechanisms need to be explored, such as including WinS criteria amongst the incentive-linked indicators (ILIs) considered under the SSRP.<sup>h</sup> Ensuring the presence of a focal person from the DoE to DWASH-CC can be useful as well.

In the context of a district-wide approach aligned with the national ODF movement, it appears appropriate to provide WinS training to DEOs, school supervisors and resource persons<sup>i</sup> and summon them to become WinS champions. As with the ODF approach, seeking their formal and public commitment will represent a critical step, holding them accountable to the population and representing the promise of social recognition and political gain.

- **At local level**, coordination with water users' committees is essential, as access to water is often the first obstacle schools face and it often requires setting an effective water-sharing arrangement between school and community. Likewise (as mentioned above), a more active engagement of DoHS is much-needed, notably through an effective implementation of the school programme by health posts.

All WinS stakeholders (at national, district, VDC, community and school level) welcome a clarification of their respective roles and responsibilities in the upcoming national guidelines. The research highlighted the importance of including the media and political parties among stakeholders: media can support WinS advocacy efforts and help hold duty bearers accountable. As for political parties, they generally have an informal but not insignificant influence in school through affiliated teachers and members of the SMC. 'Toxic leadership' at school<sup>j</sup> is often associated with political affiliations,<sup>k</sup> but political parties can be useful if brought together by school staff and SMC members and persuaded to join forces and consider WinS as a 'non-political' or a 'national cause' requiring their full support (following the exemplary national ODF movement, which managed to transcend all political boundaries).

## c) Standards

**National standards related to WinS are generally good, and improving.** The National Framework of Child Friendly Schools 2010 set the following minimum and expected indicators of infrastructures (see **Error! Reference source not found.**). The design of

<sup>h</sup> WinS requirements could be integrated among the existing 'basic child-friendly schools' criteria.

<sup>i</sup> The leadership of head teachers is consistently regarded as one of the most fundamental success factor for WinS. Resource persons (RPs), who head resource centres usually serving around 40 schools, are usually local leaders and thus often seeking opportunities to serve the community and gain social recognition. They were also described by informants from the education sector as 'bridges' between the DEO and the head teachers. RPs are in a very good position to influence head teachers, including those more reluctant to engage in WinS work. For these reasons, RPs clearly stand out as ideal WinS ambassadors.

<sup>j</sup> 'Toxic' leadership is that with a negative influence in academic terms and in promoting constructive social norms.

<sup>k</sup> Political parties have often designated the SMC chairs behind the scenes. Opposing parties present in the same community usually reach consensus through an arrangement allowing the designation of their member on a rota basis. Otherwise, they are forced to go through a genuine voting process, which is often perilous and frequently inconclusive: many schools fail to register a SMC or have a totally dysfunctional SMC as a result of community-level political rivalries.



ilities that are child-friendly, gender-friendly and suitable for those who are differently-abled have been revised, and correspondingly, capacity building has been provided to DEO engineers.<sup>8</sup> In addition, DoE and UNICEF have selected one district to showcase the implementation of the Child, Gender and Differently-abled friendly framework. Following a post-earthquake assessment of school needs, the DoE has decided to equip new buildings with RWH systems, and developed a new, more compact and more cost-effective design for sanitation facilities (a combined boys-girls toilet block<sup>l</sup>).

The sector is engaged in a process of iterative improvement, where learning from the field leads to adjustment of norms and standards. This needs to be pursued and the WASH Thematic Working Group is probably the most appropriate platform to foster such practice-policy linkages. The national WinS guidelines should ensure some level of flexibility, notably regarding the design of facilities and the type of materials used, to fit various contexts and increase school ownership. It should also define a standard for water quality.<sup>m</sup>

**The implementation of the national WinS standards is often problematic.** Meeting the minimum and expected requirements in all schools is of course very challenging, but stakeholders also note a lack of awareness at local level among masons, supervisors and engineers on the rationale for inclusive designs and a lack of compliance with the corresponding technical specifications.

**Most of the ‘institutional gears’ appear to be well in place** (i.e. policy documents, institutional framework, leadership, coordination mechanisms, standards) and the upcoming national WinS guidelines will undoubtedly simplify and bring greater internal consistency to the theoretical framework of how WinS work should be dealt with at all levels. Yet stakeholders already note **a critical lack of in-built incentive mechanisms from top to bottom**, a lack of lubricating agents allowing the effective interplay between these institutional gears. The national feedback meeting concluded that indeed an effective ‘sticks and carrots’ approach is needed in parallel to the development of a genuine local-level leadership from the grassroots to the DEO. Many motivational approaches have been already tested, often with success, but they were generally short-lived and exclusively directed towards students, failing to incentivise other key school, community and district stakeholders.

Scaling-up such incentive mechanisms requires factoring in context disparities (e.g. access to water differs markedly across regions, where the same level of WinS performance requires contrasting level of efforts). Small doable actions (SDA<sup>n9</sup>) approaches are very relevant in this context. They foster progress through gradual improvements without focusing exclusively on absolute performance. The use of certification schemes, such as

<sup>l</sup> This new design meets the Child Gender and Differently-able friendly WASH facilities standard. It provides a clear separation between girls’ and boys’ toilets.

<sup>m</sup> This standard should establish minimum requirement on a small set of criteria (e.g. critical microbiological and physicochemical parameters) and desirable objectives for a broader set of criteria determining ideal characteristics (including accessibility, availability, acceptability, affordability).

<sup>n</sup> Rather than promoting ideal WASH practices (for example, build and use a flush toilet or insist that all students wash hands at all five critical junctions, using running water and soap), SDA approaches consider a continuum of behaviours spanning from unacceptable to ideal. SDAs are behaviours that are deemed feasible to perform in resource-constrained settings, and effective at personal and public health levels - adapted from WASHPlus (2015).

UNICEF’s Three Star approach, is generally deemed promising by stakeholders, who insist on the need for regular and robust evaluation. Likewise, interschool competition can constitute an effective incentive mechanism if backed by a proper annual evaluation scheme and an approach to rewards that considers the specific needs of each stakeholder group. A caveat with rewards is to avoid creating perverse incentives, whereby stakeholder engagement becomes conditional and effective only under the promise of a reward. Official recognition of one’s leadership is sometimes the most powerful incentive.

**Box 1: To what extent does WaterAid Nepal programming address WinS policy-level bottlenecks?**

► **Policy documents:** WaterAid Nepal is actively contributing to the development of the national WinS guidelines. As part of its policy monitoring work, the country programme has identified priority areas of policy advocacy (e.g. SSDP). A data fact sheet was prepared and widely disseminated among national stakeholders, partners, communities and schools. It contributes to raising the level of awareness of all stakeholders on WinS policies, practices and financial requirements. By participating in post-ODF workshops and collaborating with the National Sanitation and Hygiene Coordination Committee (N-SH-CC), WaterAid Nepal has sought to influence the guidelines of the WASH sector for total sanitation, and notably its institutional component.

► **Leadership and coordination:** WaterAid Nepal supports the DoE through its active participation in the WASH Thematic Working Group. At community level WaterAid Nepal’s advocacy work with FEDWASUN strengthens community voice and prepares the ground for grassroots WinS leadership and accountability with the application of a social accountability tool – a community score card. The country programme supports coordination efforts at national level through the WASH Thematic Working Group and the N-SH-CC. At district level, WaterAid Nepal and partners support the D-WASH-CC during project implementation. At VDC level they help the VDC-WASH-CC develop a VDC-WASH plan. This support builds capacities in VDC- and D-WASH-CC, but does not set up the conditions for a sustained and effective coordination at these levels after phase out.

► **Norms and standards:** WaterAid Nepal has been advocating for gender-friendly design making provision for MHM provision, and has demonstrated corresponding facilities. The country programme will also seize the opportunity of the development of the WinS guideline to influence designs.

## 6.1.2. Planning

### a) Targets

The Millennium Development Goal Acceleration Framework on Sanitation prepared by the National Planning Commission had the ambition to provide toilets to all schools by 2015. In the same vein the government of Nepal set targets to meet sanitation and water for all by 2017, which includes WinS facilities. **These national targets are unrealistic considering the past and current levels of budget allocated to WinS, the limited capacity of absorption of the sector, and the O&M challenges which often markedly weaken the impact of interventions. Setting ambitious targets implies a much closer operational alignment of WinS efforts with the ODF movement.**

The official targets neglect the significant needs that schools have of rehabilitating their toilets, as opposed to building new facilities.<sup>o</sup> The approach consisting of systematically constructing instead of rehabilitating sends the wrong signals to schools and communities. **A more virtuous approach is required, whereby new infrastructures are granted on merit, built in needy schools demonstrating a capacity to maintain their facilities. Targets need to be prioritised and investments logically sequenced.** Stakeholders consistently recognise water supply and the provision of handwashing stations as top priorities. They also note that in many contexts the integrity of WinS facilities requires building protective fences. Targets might need to be defined in relation to a sequence of investments for integrated hardware and software activities, taking into account evidence of progress in schools' O&M capacity.<sup>p</sup>

**At district level, quotas for toilet construction are reportedly excessively ambitious because of inadequate funding per facility, lack of human resources, and limited logistical support for M&E.**<sup>8</sup> At school level, the school improvement plan is the mechanism by which the government releases funds. Conversations with education experts suggest that **preparing the school improvement plan is often viewed as a mere formality and does not need to be financially realistic. In these plans, WinS is rarely prioritised** (for various reasons, economic or otherwise). **A change in the perception of school WASH plans is needed:** it is critical that SMC members start envisioning the WinS component of the school improvement plan as a tool for improved working conditions for teachers and students alike – a pathway for a proud and WinS-certified school in an ODF district. Catalysing such a shift in mindset requires agent(s) with sufficient influence and authority over the SMC and willing to endorse a WinS champion role in the area. The resource persons are the natural candidates to play such a role, considering that they usually support the preparation of school improvement plans (even though they do not verify their implementation). They can help the SMC develop reasonable WinS plan and achievable targets based on the SDA approach. Tools can be used to stimulate the accountability of the SMC (vertically towards the DoE, and horizontally towards child clubs, teachers and parents) and their WASH commitment can be displayed on a board/sign visible to all in the school.<sup>q</sup>

## b) Monitoring

**Significant progress on WinS requires greater stakeholder accountability, which itself implies a regular, reliable and transparent institutionalised monitoring system.** Stakeholders consistently stress the need for increased transparency at all levels – e.g. making publicly available information about a school's WinS status, the school's requests for WinS budget, and budget allocation and use.

<sup>o</sup> This failure to respond to actual needs results in the 'toilet cemetery syndrome', i.e. generations of toilet blocks accumulating in school premises.

<sup>p</sup> This sequence should ideally be aligned with a 'small doable action' approach. In other words, targets would be more meaningful if they were expressed using indicators such as: number of schools capable of managing water efficiently; number of schools capable of managing their water efficiently and establish a consistent handwashing with soap routine; number of schools managing water efficiently, with a handwashing with soap routine, and providing separate toilets for girls, etc.

<sup>q</sup> Regular meetings between child clubs, PTAs and SMCs is another idea to foster mutual accountability.

### At national level, capturing sufficient and reliable data proves challenging:

- . A weakness of the Education Monitoring Information System (EMIS) is that it currently records the physical presence of WinS facilities but not how they function. More detailed information about the WinS status of schools is needed, which calls for integrating more criteria in the EMIS. The DoE is well aware of EMIS limitations and is making progress in addressing them: an enhanced baseline is currently being piloted through UNICEF's Three Stars and GiZ Fit for School approaches.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the DoE has integrated three new indicators to its monitoring system: a) sufficient water supply available in girls' toilets, b) handwashing stations with soap, and c) RWH in new buildings.

Nonetheless, these new indicators are not yet reflected in the bi-annual 'flash reports' published by the MoE, on the basis of which the budget is prepared. More indicators will be needed in future, particularly on water quality and O&M of WinS facilities. Yet WinS stakeholders face two constraints: DoE aims to include fewer indicators in the EMIS, and WinS is not a prioritised area.

**At district and school level** the research underlines the need to monitor the performance of the DEO on WinS using KPIs to increase their level of engagement. This implies integrating WinS indicators in school supervisors and resource persons' checklists and ensure their full buy-in by convincingly linking this new function to their mandatory role.

- . **The joint-monitoring** carried out by D-WASH-CC members is cited as a good practice for promoting reliable assessments, yet the continuity of this process generally relies on support from external partners (see Section 6.1.b). Increasing DEO engagement in this joint process requires including indicators from the DoE in the monitoring framework.
- . The reliability of the monitoring system would also benefit from **multilevel monitoring**: self-monitoring of WinS by students, SMC, and PTA was highlighted by informants, not only from the perspective of monitoring but also from an accountability and leadership perspective, as it provides school and community-level stakeholders an opportunity to take stock of their progress, and build ownership and pride for the achievements.
- . **How to sustain (high-quality) monitoring** is a major concern for stakeholders, and, according to the author, certainly the crux of the WinS sustainability puzzle. It is linked to the above-mentioned need for lubricating the parts of the system. Informants generally agree that the institutionalisation and effective enforcement of such a monitoring system might take several years, and that in the meantime a temporary system of incentives may be needed. The learning of the sector from WinS and ODF work is that systems of incentives rewarding stakeholders, notably through official recognition, and building their capacity and leadership, are successful. The idea of inter-school competitions as temporary monitoring and incentive systems appears to be an appropriate option to explore.

**Box 2: To what extent does WaterAid Nepal programming address WinS planning-level bottlenecks?**
**► Planning**

At national level, WaterAid Nepal's contribution to the development of national WinS guidelines is expected to increase the planning capacity of the whole sector. At VDC level, the country programme supports the development of the VDC-WASH-Plan, and at school level, WaterAid Nepal and its partners support SMCs in the development of their WASH plans. Whilst these activities at local level are effective from the perspective of the project objectives, they rarely strengthen in a sustainable manner the project planning and management capacity (ongoing support of stakeholders leading to gradual autonomisation implies dedicating years to this process).

**► Monitoring**

WaterAid Nepal supports monitoring efforts at D-WASH-CC level wherever it intervenes with its partners, leading to joint monitoring processes of schools once or twice following project completion. WaterAid Nepal has particularly focused on engaging DEO engineers in this process, given their key influence in giving the green light for the hardware components of projects. The challenge is to ensure continuity of this process after programme phase-out, to find means to put the government in the leadership of M&E and build a sufficiently incentivising system.

At local level, the country programme has supported the development of baselines by school and community stakeholders through the score cards, designed with the DoE to ensure alignment of criteria with official WinS policies. WaterAid Nepal and its partner FEDWASUN have decided to involve government officials (e.g. DEO staff or resource persons) in this self-monitoring process to increase stakeholder engagement and accountability.

**c) Curriculum**

Informants all recognise that whilst the curriculum includes relevant content on hygiene education (HE), **the material used and the didactic approach adopted cannot foster the development of the life skills students need to acquire.** A revision of the curriculum and refresher training for teachers are needed, backed by convincing explanations of why delivering the new HE approach is part of the official role of the teachers (as opposed to that of hygienists). **The sector should seek the inclusion of a life-skills oriented WinS module in the Teacher Professional Development (TPD) training package.**

**6.1.3. Budget**
**a) Budget amount**

**The annual budget of DoE for WinS is steadily increasing but remains insufficient** given the magnitude of needs, and when examining the actual unit costs of WinS facilities. According to a fact sheet compiled by WaterAid Nepal (2014) DoE has allocated 2.4 billion rupees for the construction of 11,500 girls' toilets and 3.2 billion rupees for the external environment improvement of 14,800 community schools from 2010/11 to 2013/14. A study conducted by DoE and WaterAid Nepal estimated 600,000 rupees to construct girl-friendly toilets as per DoE standards. However, the DoE is allocating only 250,000 rupees per toilet. Though it requires 6.6 billion rupees per year to construct girl-friendly toilets in community schools to meet one toilet for 50 students (1:50) for all by 2017, the trend of four years shows an average of only 450 million rupees allocated per year by the DoE. As noted



above, public investment remains **heavily focused on improving the provision of toilets**, and fails to finance the complementary and essential water supply and software activities needed to make this investment really meaningful.

## b) Budget planning

**Budget planning is described as a far too rigid process which is unresponsive to the actual needs of schools.** DoE representatives acknowledge that the number of students and number of school per district are the sole criteria considered so far. Identical resources are allocated to all schools considered, under the assumption that their WASH conditions and needs are broadly the same.<sup>†</sup> Prolonged budget disbursement delays are also reported. The DoE is aware of these severe limitations and is striving to improve budget planning: new budget lines have been created to factor in specific needs of water facilities, girl-friendly toilets, combined toilet blocks, and O&M. In addition, the DoE has revised its scale of unit costs for toilets, to adjust them to field realities.

Ensuring that budget allocation better reflects the specific needs of schools requires planning budgets on the basis of needs assessment undertaken by school and district stakeholders. This equates to granting SMCs and DEOs more influence. According to many informants, the DoE has legitimate reasons to believe that such a gain in power could increase the risks of corruption and political interference. Here again, **the solution is to increase the level of transparency in needs-assessment processes, budget planning and allocation.**

## c) Resource mobilisation

**At district level, the pooling of resources from different departments (DoE, DWSS, DOLIDAR) and the creation of synergies is difficult.** This partly results from the lack of coordination amongst stakeholders at D-WASH-CC level, the low engagement of DEOs, and the diverging criteria used by DWSS and DoE to determine their priority areas of intervention. This divergence reflects a lack of harmonisation of the organisational goals and targets (community coverage and VDC ODF for DWSS vs. school coverage for DoE). However, the chronic difficulty to concretise cross-department synergies (albeit that they should be natural given the importance of achieving proper institutional sanitation for ODF declaration) cannot be merely summed up as a strategic or technical issue. According to several informants, the difficulty in pooling resources also stems from reluctance by district level DoE and DWSS representatives and local development officers to share their organisational practices, internal dynamics and performance.

The National WinS Guidelines should **clarify the nature of the various funds potentially available for WinS and the conditions under which they can be mobilised. A mechanism should be developed to promote the pooling of resources across ministries and inter-departmental synergies.**<sup>§</sup> Likewise, it should address the lack of

<sup>†</sup> In practice, resources are allocated to districts. In the current fiscal year, out of 29,630 community schools, budget is allocated for the construction of 700 girl friendly toilets and 1,000 common toilets; the management of drinking water in 100 schools; the maintenance of 700 toilets; and external environment improvement in 700 community schools.

<sup>§</sup> Such a mechanism should incentivise synergies by rewarding DEOs and/or D-WASH-CC that effectively pool their resources for WinS work. The potential adverse effects of such an incentive scheme would need to be carefully investigated and addressed.



resources for coordination and joint monitoring at D-WASH-CC level.<sup>t</sup>

#### d) Community contributions and alternative means to boost ownership

**At school level, the level of contribution required from the community to build WinS hardware (and particularly toilets) constitutes a major obstacle.** Whereas SMC members are often not aware enough of the importance and potential benefits of investing in WinS, they also often consider it futile to impose on households the burden of investing in facilities that may quickly fall into disrepair and be abandoned because of poor maintenance, theft or vandalism (common in the absence of fencing). This finding contrasts with the outstanding performance (100%) reported by DoE on the utilization of its budget for the provision of toilets, which probably implies that collecting SMC contributions was no significant obstacle.<sup>u</sup>

The data collected indicates that requesting a significant contribution from the community to boost ownership and encourage good O&M of the facilities might be not be as effective as previously suggested in some of the literature consulted.<sup>8</sup> On the contrary, it appears to reduce demand. In the view of the author and many of the informants consulted, **a merit-based approach (supporting schools demonstrating a capacity to maintain their facilities) could be used in place of (or as a complement to a less-demanding) community contribution scheme to create a sense of ownership of the facilities amongst school and community stakeholders, and to encourage proper O&M.**

According to the author, such an approach revolving around stepped investments<sup>v</sup> conditioned by O&M performance would ideally reward progress made by schools against their WASH plan established according to the principle of small doable actions. **Such an approach to the disbursement of funds is compatible with the provision made in the School Sector Reform Plan for Incentive-linked-indicators (ILIs)** (referred to in section 6.1.1.b.). It would give WASH plans the significance they require and make SMCs more accountable for their implementation. In other words, this approach to investing in WinS would reward school WASH governance, which is generally identified as the main obstacle faced by the sector. The constraints of this approach are the time it imposes (smaller, iterative investments spread over several years) and the regular and reliable monitoring system it requires.

<sup>t</sup> As indicated above, these district level platforms are mainly active when external partners are working in the area.

<sup>u</sup> This contrast requires further investigation: it may for instance stem from the fact that no community contribution was requested, or from a deficient monitoring of the rate of budget utilisation.

<sup>v</sup> The following sequence could be envisioned: rehabilitation or upgrading or construction of water supply and handwashing station (to start putting improved hygiene behaviour into practice), followed by the rehabilitation of existing WASH facilities, and then by their upgrading and construction of new facilities to increase capacity.

**Box 3: To what extent does WaterAid Nepal programming address WinS budget-level bottlenecks**
**► At national level**

WaterAid Nepal's study *WASH financing in Community Schools of Nepal* has influenced the government and national WinS stakeholders. It has presumably contributed to the upward revision by the DoE of unit costs for toilet construction, and influenced their increased support for girls' needs. The development of the national WinS guidelines provides scope for WaterAid Nepal to influence budget allocation (distribution across components, phasing), and foster cross-department pooling of resources.

In recent years, WaterAid Nepal has started to explore the scope for private sector engagement in WinS programmes. Whilst the potential for partnering with non-traditional stakeholders and mobilising their philanthropic and strategic corporate social responsibility exist, the modalities of such tri-sector partnerships have not yet been analysed strategically.

WaterAid Nepal considers that the time has come to conduct a study to track budget spending. The sector, including the DoE, is ready for such a sensitive inquiry. It appears particularly relevant in a context where WinS needs to be more firmly embedded in the national ODF movement, which implies pooling significant resources and thus greater transparency in how public funds are spent.

**► At local level**

At district and VDC level WaterAid Nepal has not yet managed to clarify and communicate widely on the source of funds available, nor has it managed to foster cross-departmental synergies.

## 6.2. Developing

### 6.2.1. Access

**Water supply is the top WinS priority in Nepal.** It is generally neither adequate in quantity nor good in quality. The data slightly vary amongst sources but about 60% of all 32,130 schools in Nepal have access to drinking water facilities.<sup>11</sup> Assessments made after the earthquake indicate that this coverage had markedly declined (only 35% of schools had access to water in the surveyed area).<sup>12</sup> The extent to which the water supplied in school is actually potable is hard to assess given the near absence of water-quality monitoring.<sup>w</sup>

In many schools the challenges to access water result from **water scarcity** issues: sources of water can be too distant, or supply insufficient water to the whole community. Schools have traditionally been built on unfertile land or areas with difficult access to water (e.g. hill tops). Having analysed this problem during a post- earthquake assessment, the DoE is now allocating funds for schools to buy appropriate land in the districts.

The **low functionality of** water users' committees also affects school water supply. When functional, these committees might be reluctant to share water with the schools, which are **frequently regarded (sometimes with reason) as water wasters. Facilitating formal and workable arrangements between** water users' committees **and SMCs is an important objective** which should figure in all interventions: this arrangement has often several facets: a technical solution (e.g. the water users' committees let the school fill its

<sup>w</sup> Water-quality monitoring takes place almost exclusively as a one-off activity in NGO-led projects.

tank daily), and a political agreement (SMCs and water users' committees occasionally represent different political parties). The Federation of Water and Sanitation Users, Nepal (FEDWASUN), a partner of WaterAid Nepal, is remarkably positioned to champion WinS at community level and to play a facilitator role to work out such arrangements.

In contexts of inadequate water supply, building toilets and handwashing stations is irrelevant, and proper **needs assessments should lead to addressing priority needs first.**<sup>x</sup> As a response to the pressing needs of schools following the earthquake and considering the chronic water supply issues faced by a significant portion of all schools in Nepal, the **DoE has decided to promote the installation of RWH systems on all new buildings.** This undoubtedly represents a good complementary source and whilst the water supplied by these systems may not always meet quality standards (yet to be defined), in many cases it will represent a marked improvement. The main limitation of this source lies in the finite amount of water it can supply after the rainy season and in the resulting requirement for users to manage it very carefully.

As noted, EMIS records the presence of toilets but not the pupil-to-cubicle ratio, nor their functionality. According to the DoE, **in 2011, 80% of the schools had at least one toilet (65% of schools had separate toilets for girls and 30% for teachers).** The analysis undertaken by WaterAid Nepal suggests a current ratio of 166 girls per toilet countrywide, whereas the minimum requirement is one toilet for 50 students.<sup>13</sup> According to the conversations held during the district workshop, putting emphasis on environmental sanitation (rather than solely a focus on WASH) and **addressing solid waste management increases teachers buy-in.**

According to the non-official information reported by national stakeholders in 2014, **approximately 50% of schools have permanent hand-washing stations. Of these, only 28% are child friendly, meeting minimum national standards.**<sup>14</sup> According to the same source, handwashing stations are frequently leaking and in need of repair, which the school visits organised as part of this research confirmed. As noted above, the government has been heavily prioritising the provision of toilets over water supply and handwashing stations.

### 6.2.2. Equity

UNICEF Nepal WinS country profile notes that **quality education, especially for adolescent girls, is an imperative for the government of Nepal** and indicates that the government allocated \$15 million in 2010 to build 5,500 girl-friendly toilets and planned to build another 11,500 girls toilets by 2013. The research confirms that this commitment is leading to policy impetus and tangible improvements on the ground: the coverage of separate toilets for girls reaches 65% and is increasing; MHM features are now getting institutionalised in designs; and priority is given in budget and monitoring to ensure the availability of sufficient water in girls' toilets. Here again, **it is critical that the public funds channelled for the construction of girl-friendly toilets be accompanied by activities leading to the expected change in attitude and behaviour in students.**

<sup>x</sup> As noted above, improved coordination between DWSS, DoE and DOLIDAR will ensure that the investments they make in schools complement each other well and are properly sequenced.

**Much lower emphasis is put on responding to the specific needs of persons with physical disabilities:** a minority of schools (often supported by NGO projects) have disabled person-friendly facilities. During the construction of child-, gender- and differently-abled friendly facilities, too little attention is paid by masons, engineers and supervisors to the specific design features that meet the needs of disabled persons. This is in part due to a lack of explanations of the purpose and characteristics of these features. Progress on this front thus requires building capacities at district level and including child-, gender- and differently-abled friendly indicators in the monitoring checklists used by school supervisors and resource persons.

**Sources of inequity related to geographic and socioeconomic disparities were identified.** Hilly regions face more water supply issues which put schools in comparatively much less favourable circumstances to achieve WinS objectives. The school visits shed light into political and social (e.g. ethnic) considerations, which frequently bias district officials; prioritisation processing. **Ensuring a more equitable provision of WinS services throughout Nepal regardless of community location, ethnic belonging and political influences requires greater transparency** of WinS baselines, requests, and budget allocation (including selection criteria)

### 6.2.3. Capacity

#### a) Community support and social norms

The prevalence of open defecation in many districts constitutes a constraint when promoting behaviour change at school. But at the same time, the successful ongoing ODF movement across Nepal is probably the best vehicle WinS stakeholders have to rapidly scale-up their efforts. **It appears appropriate to prioritise WinS investment in districts committed to ODF and on their way to reaching total sanitation status.** This prioritisation is presumably the most cost-effective and is compatible with a universal coverage goal.

**Triggering a positive community pressure on schools to make progress on WinS is essential.** An interesting conversation was held on the significant psychosocial damage done during the Maoist insurgency and its impact on schools. In some areas of the country, the social norms structuring society (such as the respect for authority) have been weakened to such an extent that **dysfunctional social habits, such as defying teachers and head teachers, have now taken root in schools.** High-impact communication campaigns promoting positive role models in relation to improved WASH habits are needed to overcome this obstacle. **Overall, boosting the engagement of community members, PTAs and SMCs requires much greater resources and a more strategic plan.**

#### b) Hygiene promotion a national priority

**Policy documents and national targets reflect a strong priority placed by the government on hygiene promotion. This commitment needs to be reflected in plans (SSDP[School Strategic Development Plans]), guidelines and budgets.** Likewise, national-level informants stress the need to engage line ministries (DWSS, DoE, DoHS) much more actively from top to bottom. At local level, health posts need to be much more involved in WinS work. Their school programme seems to be addressed as a mere

formality and the performance of health post workers in relation to its delivery is not monitored by the health district office. Appropriate information, communication, and education tools are lacking, and no publicity is aimed at schools, which are often unaware of the availability of guidance on hygiene promotion from local experts.<sup>y</sup>

**The scope for including KPIs related to school health programmes in EMIS needs to be examined This could include the possibility to set up informal qualitative evaluations by WinS focal teachers to provide constructive feedback to health post workers, enabling their useful contribution to the WinS/ODF movement.** Likewise, the sector should explore the possibility of having health outreach workers conduct **WASH sensitisation towards pregnant mothers**. Parents' support to WinS activities (either directly by reinforcing new behaviours learned at school, or indirectly through the PTA and SMC) contributes to the success of interventions. Building their awareness on the importance of hygiene and WinS is critical and key opportunities to shift their mindset need to be seized.<sup>z</sup>

### c) Students' participation in WinS activities

**The participation of students in WinS O&M activities is generally low and difficult to sustain.** Parents sometimes oppose the participation of children in toilet cleaning activities. In some schools (often NGO-supported), child clubs, which are listed as a minimum requirement for community participation in the SSHE Guidelines and in the National Framework for Child Friendly Schools, are activated. They sometimes manage to promote proper sanitation, help clean facilities, collect money for O&M inputs and ensure soap is available. The concept of 'children as agents of change' has proved very relevant to Nepal. Not only does it make sense to focus efforts towards the youth given the young age of the Nepalese population, but parents seem particularly responsive to the messages they receive from their children (as an expert in hygiene behaviour change commented, "for us Nepalese people, children are our gods and goddesses"). **Whilst children-centred approaches are well rooted, mechanisms are required to ensure that student annual turnover and the usual erosion of motivation amongst pupils does not affect the continuity of the student-led WinS activities.**

Child clubs appear less relevant in primary schools, where the capacity of pupils to lead WinS activities is more limited. The responsibilities assigned to them (e.g. monitoring the cleanliness of the fingernails and bodies of their classmates; ensuring that they do not drop litter) are not inspiring enough to keep children fulfilling them in a sustainable manner. Representatives from the MoE stress the avoidance WASH-only child clubs: these clubs represent a great tool and resource for promoting learning and development in many dimensions. **Narrowing the use of child clubs to WASH activities will usually lead to a rapid loss of motivation from students and is likely to reduce buy-in from teachers, who would prefer to see the potential of these clubs expanded beyond WASH.**<sup>aa</sup>

<sup>y</sup> Teachers and students are generally more willing to take on sensitisation messages delivered by external stakeholders.

<sup>z</sup> In this respect, according to marketing studies, pregnancy is a key window of opportunity to trigger change of habits.

<sup>aa</sup> Therefore, in a context where cross-ministry efforts are advised from top to bottom, it makes sense to explore the possibility of creating SMC-child club links on a broader set of sector-specific activities. i.e. sport,



#### Box 4: To what extent does WaterAid Nepal programming address WinS developing-level bottlenecks?

WaterAid Nepal and its partners contribute to increasing WinS coverage in Nepal under approaches that generally integrate hardware and software components. In this respect, the advocacy work carried out with FEDWASUN would need to target schools with access to water, or include a water supply component (see recommendations). Although WaterAid Nepal input is quantitatively marginal considering the magnitude of the needs at country level, it allows the country programme and its partners to learn from the field and gain the legitimacy needed to influence sector policies and practices.

WaterAid Nepal and partners strongly support principles that are child-friendly, gender-friendly and supportive of those who are differently-abled, both on the hardware (design) and software (sensitisation and training) facets of projects, and have put special emphasis on MHM and child rights. With its partners, WaterAid Nepal intervenes in the most remote and inaccessible areas of the country, and where the needs are most acute, thus reducing geographical and socio-economic disparities.

### 6.3. Sustaining

#### 6.3.1. O&M inputs

**The various inputs needed to ensure the proper O&M of Wins facilities (e.g. soap and detergents, brushes and buckets, but also spare parts and locally skilled workers to repair doors, water tanks and handwashing stations), are generally available throughout the country,** according to the stakeholders consulted. Access to such products was not identified as a constraint. However, in some areas, the absence of fences sometimes leads WinS facilities to be misused or vandalised and some key items (taps, cleaning products) to be stolen. This generally ends up defeating the goodwill to maintain the toilets and ensure handwashing stations are fitted with functional taps.

An assessment carried out by a team of national WinS experts in 18 schools of six districts indicated that 57% of the schools had a separate budget for WinS O&M, the amount of which varied considerably, with 13% of schools allocating less than \$100 and 4% allocating more than \$1,000 annually.<sup>14</sup> The author could not investigate this aspect any further, but the school visits conducted showed that **SMCs often rely on the ‘stationery and miscellaneous’ budget line to cover their WinS expenses. This situation should improve gradually for all schools as the DoE announced the creation of a new budget line earmarked for WASH O&M expenses.** Some schools consider additional mechanisms in place to mobilise resources, such as penalties for unjustified absenteeism, contribution to WinS O&M as part of the admission fee, or ‘one child, one soap’ initiatives to build a stock of soap bars at the beginning of the year.

#### 6.2.2. Maintenance

**The SMC is authorised to mobilise resources for school operation, appoint or deploy teachers, approve school budget, PTAs, appoint members for the social audit of the school, formulate school improvement plans, etc. SMCs are also known to contribute**

art, nutrition/agriculture, business management, in addition to WASH activities. Teams led by a child club focal student and a SMC member, potentially supported by a non-traditional partner, could be formed and compete with other schools in a competition putting much emphasis on WASH.



to school improvement in terms of physical development, information management, and teaching learning process (see Annex E for further information on SMC mandate, structure, and historical background). SMCs (which include head teachers and their secretaries) are also in charge of organisation of good O&M of WinS facilities, including the purchase of inputs and the development and enforcement of an effective O&M routine.<sup>bb</sup> PTA and SMC members generally lack awareness of WASH issues. Educating them on these issues should be a priority. Informants stress that SMCs can embody in each school the WinS champions that VDC secretaries have become in the ODF movement. SMCs and communities can achieve a lot with the support of civil society organisations (CSOs) (e.g. FEDWASUN) and media through a transparency and government accountability approach. Their demand can be aggregated to achieve significant influence at district level.

**SMCs will sometimes need to focus on influencing the head teacher, whose stronghold on decision making and budget prioritisation is not rare.** Toxic headteachers can easily nip a WinS initiative in the bud. SMCs empowered and committed to champion WinS have sufficient power to turn a toxic head teacher into a passive, neutral or even supportive stakeholder. As noted in section 6.1.1.b. **protecting WinS from political rivalries at SMC level is a prerequisite.** Involving SMC members in the implementation of software and/or hardware activities (they tend to operate as mere bank accounts) will increase their commitment. Finally, improving the accountability of the SMC towards the community will increase the support they receive from the local population.<sup>cc</sup>

**SMCs generally rely on a peon/helper to clean the toilets but the consistency and quality of cleaning is often insufficient.** The reasons for this ineffective cleaning are varied: excessive workload and low priority given by the SMC to this task, lack of water supply, lack of detergent, caste considerations (it was indicated that the helper may sometimes be reluctant to clean toilets used by students belonging to lower castes). As noted, the participation of students in cleaning routines is generally low. In some rare schools, child clubs have been found to help keep the facilities clean and collect money to ensure soap for handwashing and O&M items are always available, but these dynamics are generally not sustained long.

In schools lacking a strong and committed SMC, achieving good O&M of WinS facilities is extremely difficult unless the DoE prioritises it. The DoE has recently been considering requesting that teachers use the students' toilets. This can help ensure that teachers support proper O&M of these facilities. There is a risk however, judging from similar experiences in Bangladesh, that teachers keep the toilets locked for their use to stop them becoming dirty. **Resource persons, who are mandated to provide guidance and**

<sup>bb</sup> For basic education (5-12 age group), the School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP) indicates that restructuring schools is the shared responsibility of local government and the SMC. The SMC is accountable to school and community (The World Bank – [School Governance FAQ Nepal](#)). According to the National Child-Friendly School Framework, SMC officials must be conscious of their duty and accountable to parents in relation to efficiency in school performance. The SSRP specifies that SMCs have to report to parents on school performance and to the local government in compliance with regulatory requirements including social inclusion, financial and social audit.

<sup>cc</sup> In many areas, the sense of ownership of the school among community members is affected by the level of transparency of SMC operations and the prevalence of political interference.

**oversight to schools, have a key role to play**, for which they need to receive clear instructions from the top, as well as WASH training, and a clear rationale linking their new WinS responsibilities to their job description.<sup>dd</sup>

### 6.2.3. Use

Documentation reviewed shows that the use of **toilets is often dependent on their cleanliness**. Girls report not using them at all due to unsanitary conditions.<sup>8</sup> Observations made during the school visits confirm, as expected, that filthy or damaged toilets (e.g. broken doors) are left abandoned by the children. Ensuring that the design of toilets allows light to enter the cubicle is critical: children are often afraid of the dark and the obscurity affects the use of toilets and their proper cleaning. The sense of ownership of WinS facilities among children (essential to promote their proper use) can be stimulated through decoration and through child to child awareness raising, and in some cases through a cleaning routine.

The WinS country profile sheet presented by UNICEF for Nepal indicates a **very low level of safe health practices among children in schools, such as handwashing with soap and the adequate storage and handling of safe water**. Other documents also stress the low emphasis put on handwashing in most schools: practical HE lessons are generally lacking and the habit of handwashing with soap is rarely developed. An assessment carried out by national WinS experts in 18 schools from six districts found only 33% of all students washing their hands after using the toilet and only 19% using soap.<sup>14</sup> There is a need to establish daily routines supported by a system of self-monitoring and incentives. **The Three Star approach promoted by UNICEF and GiZ appears particularly relevant to boost efforts at this level. However, the success of such a certification scheme depend on a rigorous monitoring system, which implies the engagement of DoE representatives from top to bottom. In particular, support from resource persons, school supervisors and DEOs is essential.**

#### Box 5: To what extent does WaterAid Nepal programming address WinS sustaining-level bottlenecks?

WaterAid Nepal and partners strengthen SMCs, increase their level of awareness on WASH issues and help them set up O&M plans. HE activities put emphasis on the adoption of new attitudes and behaviours and the development of improved WASH habits.

The review of the programme documentation made available to the consultant and the conversations held with WaterAid Nepal staff and representatives of NGO partners suggest that the approaches implemented by the country programme produce much improved WASH behaviours where the school environment is enabling, notably in terms of school management (supportive), access to water (good), and security (granted). In schools where one of these conditions is not met, the gains resulting from the interventions generally erode rapidly.

<sup>dd</sup> As noted in section 6.1.2.b, including WinS criteria (such as indicators to assess the functionality of facilities and the quality of O&M) in the monitoring checklists of school supervisors and resource persons is critical.

## 7. Rationale for recommendations

The analysis presented in the previous section reveals some of the issues (related to accountability factors, political economy drivers or otherwise) underlying the WinS bottlenecks in Nepal. This analysis has already introduced a number of recommendations. Some of them have quite a general scope but the author has also provided guidance on possible ways to address very specific issues. These recommendations are not directed towards WaterAid Nepal but are meant to be relevant to the whole sector.

The purpose of the following section is not to list and organise all the suggestions woven through the above analysis, but rather to highlight the principal recommendations emerging from this research in Nepal, which have a bearing on WaterAid country and regional strategies. Also, the following section provides an opportunity to share insights into what this research reveals in terms of the potential use of the WinS-BAT for WaterAid WinS programming.

## 8. Recommendations

### 8.1. Recommendations for WaterAid country strategies

#### 8.1.1. Foreword

The key recommendations formulated for WaterAid WinS programming in Nepal arise from an understanding of the context based on the findings of this research, which concludes that:

1. The enabling environment is ready for a significant breakthrough. The policy context and institutional framework, the quality of leadership and coordination at national level, and the traction exerted by the ODF movement all suggest a window of opportunity for much more strategic WinS endeavours.
2. WaterAid and its partners, with the whole sector, can bring about a significant leap in the way WinS work is addressed, leading to greater impact and faster scaling-up.

This breakthrough and significant change in practices and level of ambition require that WaterAid Nepal become a powerful catalyst (with other influential players such as UNICEF and others) to foster a harmonisation of the policies at national level across departments and to accompany the development of clear guidelines allowing their operationalisation. The development of WinS guidelines is already ongoing but work to bring the key ministries and departments to reconcile their goals, targets and policies to allow a WinS movement to blossom alongside the ODF movement still require much efforts.

To support and feed this strategic policy advocacy work with experience from the field, WaterAid Nepal and partners should take the lead in – or join others in – a collaborative effort demonstrating a scalable, district-level model aligned with guidelines, and embedded in the ODF movement.

## 8.1.2. Strategic recommendation on advocacy

### a) Rally national stakeholders around a WinS movement supporting the ODF movement

- > As part of the WASH Thematic Working Group, WaterAid Nepal has a role to play in fostering the greater engagement of MoHP/DoHS and to build a momentum around WinS as a critical component of the ODF movement.
- > If the decision is made to establish WinS work much higher on the political agenda, alongside the ODF movement, and to rally maximum institutional support, WaterAid Nepal might want to explore with its partners and WASH Thematic Working Group: the relevance of framing WinS work as the core of wider school development interventions targeting additional (but not unrelated to WinS) objectives and involving activities spanning other sectors (e.g. health, nutrition, education); allowing wider stakeholder engagement and buy-in (at MoE and far beyond); and fostering leadership at all levels.<sup>ee</sup>

### b) Foster policy harmonisation across departments and improve WinS-ODF movement linkages

The research stresses the need to harmonise policies across departments: between the DoE, the DWSS and the DoHS. In particular, WinS should be embedded much more firmly into the national open-defecation-free movement, which represents a golden opportunity for scaling-up. Indeed, institutional latrines represent a significant challenge for VDCs and districts to achieve ODF status.

- > WaterAid Nepal has a key role to play, alongside partners such as UNICEF to advocate for this harmonisation of policy and strengthening of WinS-ODF movement linkages. Notably, WaterAid Nepal should contribute to influence DWSS to put greater emphasis on institutional sanitation and acknowledge that dysfunctional WinS prevents ODF.
- > WaterAid Nepal and WASH Thematic Working Group members should also work on solutions to harmonise criteria used by DWSS and DoE to prioritise their interventions in schools and communities.
- > The development of the School Sector Development Plan (in the continuation of the SSRP) constitutes another important opportunity for the sector to include WinS requirements and activities in an influential policy document. The nutrition component of this plan, which seems at first sight to be the most obvious entry point for WASH, is probably where lobbying efforts should focus.

<sup>ee</sup> The underlying rationale for this is that problems around WinS are less to do with WASH issues than governance and accountability issues at school, district and national level. A leap forward on WinS requires focusing more on the political economy and accountability issues analysed in this report. Addressing these issues is highly relevant to a number of organisations (public, private, local, national, international) who are pursuing other agendas in schools. WinS brings water, health and dignity to schools, helps reduce absenteeism and brings life and paves the way for further development of the human potential. WinS efforts thus considerably support the work of organisations focusing on health, nutrition, education, culture, sport – even more so if WinS programming targets governance and accountability issues.

### c) Supporting the development of National WinS guidelines

- . In this context, the national WinS guidelines under development shall pave the way for a sector-led WinS movement, which should be part and parcel of the ODF movement, based on a district-wide approach and following relatively standard processes and approaches.
- . The WinS guidelines will define the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder. It is important that these definitions take into account the implications of greater WinS-ODF linkages in terms of stakeholder mapping (e.g. VDC secretaries are ODF champions, but hardly play any role on WinS so far), roles and responsibilities, and processes.
- . It is critical that these guidelines promote and harmonise WinS practices, whilst leaving room for innovation. Innovation is likely to be needed to address the complex WinS sustainability challenge.
- . The participation of WaterAid Nepal in the development of the guidelines is an opportunity to influence DoE plans, targets, budgets, and monitoring in a number of ways suggested throughout this report. WaterAid Nepal should reflect on the relevance of including certain guiding principles:
  - Adopting a two-pronged ‘management and leadership’ approach to increase stakeholder accountability. On one hand a management approach is needed to establish the systems and processes that will ensure compliance, transparency and responsiveness (effective incentives systems are particularly needed). On the other hand, a strong and pervasive leadership is needed to create and sustain a national WinS movement, which implies efforts to mobilise, inspire, and actively engage stakeholders from the grassroots to the top.
  - Bringing greater transparency in the system through reliable monitoring systems.

#### 8.1.3. Service delivery

##### a) Adopt a district-wide approach for WinS

WaterAid Nepal should avoid scattering its WinS efforts geographically and rather focus on demonstrating a district-wide model. The progress needed in WinS outcomes requires deeper and more sustained engagement with school, community and district stakeholders. It makes sense for WaterAid Nepal and partners to frame WinS as one facet of the institutional component of a district-wide approach. In such circumstances, WaterAid Nepal and partners would have the opportunity to remain engaged with stakeholders for a much longer period of time, allowing a more effective strengthening of their capacities, and regressive support to the systems and processes put in place to ensure sustainable service delivery.

Districts of intervention should be selected according to criteria reflecting an enabling environment, e.g. ODF or post-ODF commitment, ODF leadership, commitment from DWSS/DoE/LDO to foster synergies at D-WASH-CC level, willingness from DEO to experiment with new incentive and monitoring systems (aligned with DoE policies).



## b) Demonstrate a comprehensive model

The district-wide model should comprise the following strategic objectives (amongst others):

1. Build WinS leadership and champions, and trigger official commitment towards WinS.
2. Implement sustainable child-, gender- and differently-abled friendly WinS services, improved hygiene habits and effective O&M (in e.g. 30% of the schools of the district).<sup>ff</sup>
3. Build stakeholders' capacities and autonomy: through hands-on training they gradually gain autonomy (SMCs can develop and implement the WASH component of their school improvement plan whilst DEO/D-WASH-CC can implement the model in the rest of the district).
4. Enhance stakeholder accountability through reliable monitoring systems and transparency.

## c) Guiding principles

- . Sequence investments (notably hardware inputs) logically and following an SDA approach, rewarding schools that demonstrate a capacity to maintain their facilities.
- . Ensure that 'lubricating mechanisms' are in place to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the coordination, monitoring, and incentive systems. A first assumption is that it may take 5-10 years before such systems are institutionalised, enforced and fully effective. In the interim, mimicking (or parallel) systems need to be implemented long enough to create the habits at school and district levels. A second assumption is that after a period of 3-5 years of improved WASH conditions, schools will not want to revert to their prior, unimproved conditions and that the lubricating system will not be as essential. Also, it is hoped that the development and gradual enforcement of WinS DoE policies will take over.
- . Support from WaterAid Nepal and its partners to mandated stakeholders should gradually decrease to allow them to steadily gain confidence in fulfilling their role independently. The model thus requires stakeholders to agree a comprehensive exit strategy describing the different phases preceding phase-out.

As indicated, this section is not meant to provide very specific operational guidance for WaterAid Nepal and partners on how to conduct WinS work. Whilst some suggestions were made throughout the report, the aim of the research is not to evaluate in detail the current practices or to make detailed recommendations on how to improve them. The research has merely highlighted aspects that need to be addressed in addition to the activities included in typical WinS projects. Most, if not all of the work that WaterAid Nepal and partners are already doing as part of their WinS interventions will need to be pursued.

<sup>ff</sup> A minimum number of schools is required to demonstrate a district-wide model. A model successful in 20-40% of all schools in a district is likely to be considered as a model fit for district-wide implementation. A critical number of schools is also needed to generate sufficient buy-in from district and national-level stakeholders. By targeting *only* 30% of schools in the first phase, the approach would allow the government to apply the model during successive phases with increasing levels of autonomy (with minor or no input from external partners). Reducing the proportion of schools targeted in the first phase also means that resources are available to roll out the model in several districts, triggering emulation amongst districts, allowing shared learning and insights about the relevance of the model in different contexts.

## Annexes

### Annex A – TOR

#### Background

These terms of reference relate to a programme of research and advocacy on school WASH, initiated by WaterAid's East Africa and South Asia regional teams. It sits in the context of WaterAid's well-established school WASH work in eight countries of the two regions,<sup>99</sup> and a recent grant by H&M Foundation to extend this work. It also sits in the context of WaterAid's Global Strategy, programmatic approach, district-wide approach, framework documents, country strategies and evaluations.

#### Research aim and objectives

##### Aim

To set out a systematic process by which WaterAid can design and improve its strategies and approaches for school WASH

##### Objectives

1. Review and deepen existing school WASH bottleneck analyses (using school WASH bottleneck analysis tool - BAT) or in the case of countries with no such analysis, undertake them. Focus on detailed description of the BAT components and explanation of underlying causes of strengths and weaknesses. Explicitly include review of country monitoring system and indicators.
2. Analyse WaterAid country programme activities, and as far as possible the work of other organisations, and the extent to which they address school WASH needs and weaknesses.
3. In the course of the work, highlight examples of good practice and promising innovations. Also identify unsuccessful approaches that should be avoided in the interventions of WaterAid and/or other organisations.
4. Recommend modifications to existing WaterAid school WASH strategies and approaches, based on the analyses undertaken and clearly articulated reasoning which is harmonised across the two study regions.
5. Recommend ways of strengthening the existing bottleneck analysis tool and make other recommendations relevant to the work.

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<sup>99</sup> In East Africa: Ethiopia, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. In South Asia: Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan.

## General approach

The research will be undertaken through a combination of country-level document reviews, key informant and group interviews, stakeholder workshops, and field visits in an indicative programme as follows:

### Preparation

- Development of generic themes/questions framework by stakeholder group (0.5 day)
- Document review and pre-visit planning – 2-3 days

### Country visits

Activity	Days
Briefing with WaterAid team and planning	1 – 1.5
National key informant interviews	1 – 1.5
National workshop	1
Field visits	4-5
State/provincial workshop	1
Workshop with WaterAid staff and partners	1
Reporting	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>11 – 13</b>

### School visits – purpose

A small number (approximately five) visits (a) to explore bottlenecks and practices at school and community level; (b) to give legitimacy to the discussions with national and local stakeholders; and (c) to facilitate discussions with school management, students and communities. These visits are not intended to generate a body of statistically representative data, but to understand the potential challenges and opportunities viewed at that level. The schools visited should be ones that were the subject of an intervention by WaterAid at least two years ago. Selection of schools should be purposive, where possible focusing on:

- high performing schools in the public sector;
- a mix of rural and urban, large and small;
- a mix of interventions in which (a) the entry point has been the school, and (b) the entry point has been the wider community.

### Deliverables

- Draft desk report at least one week prior to the relevant country visit (in note form, taking

account of existing BAT, baseline and other relevant country documentation, maximum 5pp).

- Research protocol for each country, including:
  - planned itinerary, including key informants;
  - research framework specific to the country;
  - semi-structured interview guides specific to the country.
- Draft country reports (four, guide length 20-25pp excluding summary and Annexes).
- Final country reports (4)

### Timescale

Target completion of all final country reports 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015.

### Inputs

WaterAid will provide the following:

- Contact details of country focal person(s)
- WaterAid general documentation, namely:
  - Global Strategy
  - Programmatic approach
  - District-wide approach
  - Frameworks
  - H&M Foundation programme summary
  - All relevant country documentation, including:
    - policy documents of ministries of education, health and water which refer to school WASH
    - laws, guidelines and standards related to School WASH
    - documentation of Educational Management Information Systems (EMIS) and monitoring indicators and data
    - sector performance reports
    - school WASH plans, budgets, targets
    - WaterAid country programme evaluations
    - WaterAid Country Strategy Papers
    - WaterAid Annual Reports for last three years
    - WaterAid current multi-year plan and budget
    - WaterAid School WASH research and monitoring reports
- All in-country arrangements for meetings, field visits and workshops.

The maximum person-days per research consultant is set at 70 days.

### Other requirements

The consultant is required to keep a record of time devoted to the programme, and to invoice for time spent up to the maximum days payable. Receipts must be submitted for all reimbursable expenses.

### Payment milestones

- Up to ten days fees on completion of four desk reports and research protocols.
- Up to 14 days fees plus expenses against receipts on submission of each draft country

report (total 56/70 days in up to four/five tranches).

- Four days on submission of final country reports after one round of comments.

### Country report structure

Pages	Section	Responsibility
1	Background	RCC
1.5	WaterAid context	RCC
2	Country context	RA, JT
0.5	Research aim and objectives	From TOR
1	Specific methodology (including limitations in each country)	RA, JT
10	Findings in relation to Enabling, Developing, Sustaining	RA, JT
1	Rationale for recommendations	RA, JT, RCC
4	Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For WaterAid country strategies</li> <li>• For WaterAid regional strategies</li> <li>• For the BAT</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>	RA, JT
	Annexes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A – TOR</li> <li>• B – Itinerary</li> <li>• C – Informants/contact details</li> <li>• D – Reports of KI interviews, visits, workshops</li> </ul>	RA, JT

In addition each country report will be supplemented by a 2-4 page easy-to-read summary illustrated with ‘voices from the field’, photographs and analysis.



## Annex B – Itinerary

Date/Location	Time		Task/Activity	Objective	Remarks
	From	To			
Sun 30 Aug	8:35		Arrival to Kathmandu		
Monday 31 August Kathmandu	10:00 11:30 14:00	11:30 12:15 17:00	<b>1) Briefing meeting with WaterAid Nepal</b> - all staffs <b>2) Meeting with Bishesh Aryal FEDWASUN</b> (prep district workshop) <b>3) Meeting with Rural/Urban/Advocacy program staffs</b>	1) Introduction to the research project 2) Discussion around the methodology, tailoring of the analytical framework, planning, security/logistics and other issues.	WaterAid Nepal meeting hall.
Tuesday 1 September Kathmandu	9:00	17:00	<b>National key informant interviews</b> - Mukti Pokhrel, Nepal Redcross @ 11:30 - Kamal Adhikari, DWSS (Gov WASH Ministry) @ 2pm - Yadav Mainali, Save the Children @ 15:45	Introduce the research and its Research into Use focus. Gather perspective of key national level stakeholder on specific WinS themes Introduce the objectives of the national workshop and stakeholder feedback meeting	Some meetings need to be confirmed.
Wednesday 2 September Kathmandu	9:00	17:00	<b>National Key Informant Interviews</b> - DOE @ 10:30 (1 hour joint meeting with several reps. Possibly followed by additional one-to-one 30 min conversation to address specific themes) - Jeevan Sershan, DFID @ 12:30 (Sherchan stationed at DoE) - UNICEF from 2-3pm - Ang Pasang Sherpa, JICA @ 3:30pm - Sudha Shrestha and Rajendra Manadhar, UNHABITAT @ 4:30pm.		
Thursday 3 September Kathmandu	9:30	16:30	<b>National Workshop</b> Invitees: all above-listed orgs. plus WFP, Plan International, Helvetas, consultant in charge of developing the draft official WinS guidelines for Nepal, WaterAid Nepal partners... WaterAid Nepal will seek the participation of a high-profile staff from UNICEF, DWSS or DoE for the opening session.	Introduce our research and its RIU focus: create buy-in and engagement Present key findings from recent analyses from UNICEF and WaterAid Nepal (building on already existing findings and tools i.e. WinS BAT) Taking it a step further by jointly exploring accountability and 'political-economy' issues underlying WinS bottlenecks	Agenda prepared and provided with links to relevant reports. Venue to be identified.

Friday 4 September Kathmandu	9:30	17:00	<p><b>Meeting with NEWAH</b> (WaterAid Nepal NGO partner) - 2pm (1-1.5 hrs)</p> <p><b>Meeting with selected WaterAid Nepal staff</b> (if needed)</p> <p><b>Study time</b> for consultant to sum up week 1 findings (afternoon)</p>	<p>Meet school (HT, SMC, PTA) stakeholders</p> <p>Discuss specific WaterAid Nepal WinS programming issues with WaterAid Nepal staff, and NEWAH</p>	
Saturday 5 September Makwanpur	12:00	16:00	<p><b>Travel to Makwanpur:</b> 15-30 min Flight plus 1-2 hr drive</p>		
Sunday 6 September Makwanpur	9:00	16:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Visit 2: visit of two schools (FEDWASUN advocacy urban and rural schools (2-3 hrs) and shorter visit)</li> <li>- Meeting with FEDWASUN</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meeting with field partner staff related to the project</li> <li>- Interaction with District Education Office</li> <li>- Observation of school and meeting with SMC</li> </ul>	
Monday 7 September Makwanpur	9:00	13:00	<p><b>District workshop</b></p> <p>Invitees: representatives of 10-15 schools (SMC/PTA, HT/teachers); representatives of DEO, DHO (and of nearest health posts (1-2)); reps of local NGOs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduce our research</li> <li>- Present key findings from recent analyses</li> <li>- Jointly explore issues underlying WinS bottlenecks</li> </ul>	<p>Agenda prepared and provided to invitees</p> <p>Venue to be prepared by FEDWASUN</p>
Tuesday 8 September Kathmandu	9:00	18:00	<p><b>Travel back to Kathmandu</b></p>		
Wednesday 9 September Bhaktapur and Kathmandu	9:00	18:00	<p><b>School visits in Bhaktapur</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- in-depth visit (2-3 hours) in first school allowing conversation with all relevant school and community stakeholders</li> <li>- shorter visit &lt;1 hour to another peri-urban school</li> </ul> <p><b>Study time for consultant</b> in the afternoon</p>	<p>Explore issues on WinS factors at school/community/district levels and their underlying causes</p>	
Thursday 10 September Kathmandu			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Consultant prepares key findings for feedback meeting</b> (morning)</li> <li>- <b>Meeting with WaterAid Nepal</b> Govind, Binesh, and CR (TBC)</li> </ul>	<p>Jointly prepare process, format and content of feedback meeting</p>	

<p>Friday 11 September Kathmandu</p>	<p>10:30</p>	<p>14:00</p>	<p><b>Feedback meetings</b> (mid-morning – mid afternoon)  <b>1) Meeting with all stakeholders invited to national workshop</b>                  (including the consultant in charge of developing the WinS guideline (1.5 hrs: 45 min feedback + 45 discussion, validation).  <b>2) Meeting with WaterAid Nepal staff and partner</b>                  Free afternoon (tourism?)                  Flight back to Paris (departure at 21:35)                  Report and findings from country visit to be shared with national workshop (RIU) as input for the development of official WinS guidelines</p>	<p>Share, validate the relevance of preliminary findings and recommendations (and make more suggestions) re. improving WinS programming, generally speaking (meeting 1), and specifically at the level of WaterAid Nepal (meeting 2)</p>	
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## Annex D – miscellaneous

### 1. List of key WinS policy documents

- School Sanitation and Hygiene Education (SSHE) guidelines (1997, UNICEF/DWSS)
- National Strategy on School Health and Nutrition (SHN) (MoE and MoHP, 2006)
- School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP) (MoE, 2009-2015) sets minimum (including WinS) requirements
- Child-Friendly School Initiative (MoE, 2010): define the child, gender and differently abled (CGD)-friendly WASH facilities.
- National Sanitation and Hygiene Master Plan (2011): WinS to achieve ODF

### 2. Minimum and expected requirements

(National Framework for Child Friendly Schools, 2010) WaterAid Factsheet

Area	Indicator	Minimum	Expected
Physical Infrastructure	Toilet	Separate toilets for girls and boys	Separate toilets for girls and boys
		One set of toilet for every 50 pupils	One set of toilet for every 20 pupils
		Separate arrangement of urination and defecation with running water	Provision of separate toilets with running water for urination and defecation
		Provision of regular cleaning	Provision of cleaning to ensure regular sanitation
	Toilets with doors and windows that can be bolted from inside	Toilets with doors and windows that can be bolted from inside and shut and opened easily	
Drinking Water	Availability of a tap with potable water within school premises	Provision of drinking water with a filter in every classroom of school	

### 3. SMCs in Nepal

Participatory and democratic process of forming governance structure at the local level in Nepal.

School management committees (SMC) have existed in Nepalese public schools for a very long time. But, the formation of SMCs was highly bureaucratic and political until 2001, as SMC members were either handpicked by bureaucrats or local politicians. There was little or no opportunity for true parents or local community members to be represented on the committee.

In 2001, the government took the bold step of amending its Education Act to make the formation of SMCs mandatory in all types of schools, whether public or private. In public schools, the SMC comprises ten members who have a tenure of three years. The parent representatives are elected. Every school prepares the list of eligible voters from among the parents or guardians of children attending the schools. The parent assembly finalises the list of SMCs preventing local elites or non-parents becoming officials of the SMC. The composition of the SMC includes a chairperson and three members, including a woman member elected from among the parents. In cases where parents are in agreement on who should become SMC chairperson or members, elections are not necessary. The head teacher serves as the secretary of the SMC. This group of people then nominates one member from among local educationists, one member from among the school's founders, and one donor. The member of the municipality or village committee of the concerned unit serves as the ex-officio member. This arrangement has brought visible changes in school management in terms of local participation in decision-making.

The Education Act of Nepal makes the role of the SMC meaningful. The SMC is authorised to mobilize resources for school operations, appoint or deploy teachers, approve school budgets, form Parent Teacher Associations,, appoint members for the social audit of the school, formulate school improvement plans, etc. One study has reported that SMCs have contributed to school improvement in terms of physical development, information management, and teaching learning process.

Source: [UNESCO](#)

## Annex E – References

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