

# Effective approaches to engage and empower children as Agents of Change in WASH in Schools



October 2019

Documentation of WASH in Schools approaches in the Pacific

*Kiribati, Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu*





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# Introduction

Children are the core business of WASH in Schools (WinS). If they are not involved as partners and leaders to the change that is promoted in WinS, then the approaches will not be effective at getting children to adopt improved WASH practices and promote them successfully at home with their parents.

Over the last few years, UNICEF Pacific has adopted the WASH in Schools (WinS) Three Star Approach to improve WASH in schools and build the capacity of children, teachers and communities in becoming agents of change for improved hygiene behaviours – such as handwashing at critical times (before eating and after using the toilet), increased knowledge on menstrual hygiene management, increased demand for safe drinking water, and use of toilets instead of open defecation. WASH in School projects through UNICEF are being implemented, or have been implemented, in various countries in the South Pacific, namely in Fiji (2015–2020), Kiribati (2015–2018), Solomon Islands (2016–2021) and Vanuatu (2017–2022).

# Summary of Findings

This document is a review of child-focused activities in WinS programs that have been developed and used in 17 schools in Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. It presents the following:

- Examples of behaviour change communication materials used with children in WASH in Schools programs
- The experiences of teachers and students in helping children to act as agents of change for WASH at school, in the community and in their homes

Sustainability challenges in the schools can affect children's engagement. For this report, the schools that had secure water supply and active adult champions still had clean toilets and students demonstrating hand-washing practice, and the students were keen advocates for improved WASH behaviour. The schools that had issues with water supply or had experienced changes in senior leadership and didn't have teachers who were WASH champions still had students who demonstrated knowledge and desire to practice but were not able to maintain the positive behaviours that they established a few years earlier. The other challenge facing schools is the skills, planning and funding needed to improve accessibility and participation of children with special needs.

## ***Strategies to foster ongoing participation and involvement of children in WASH activities as they move through the school:***

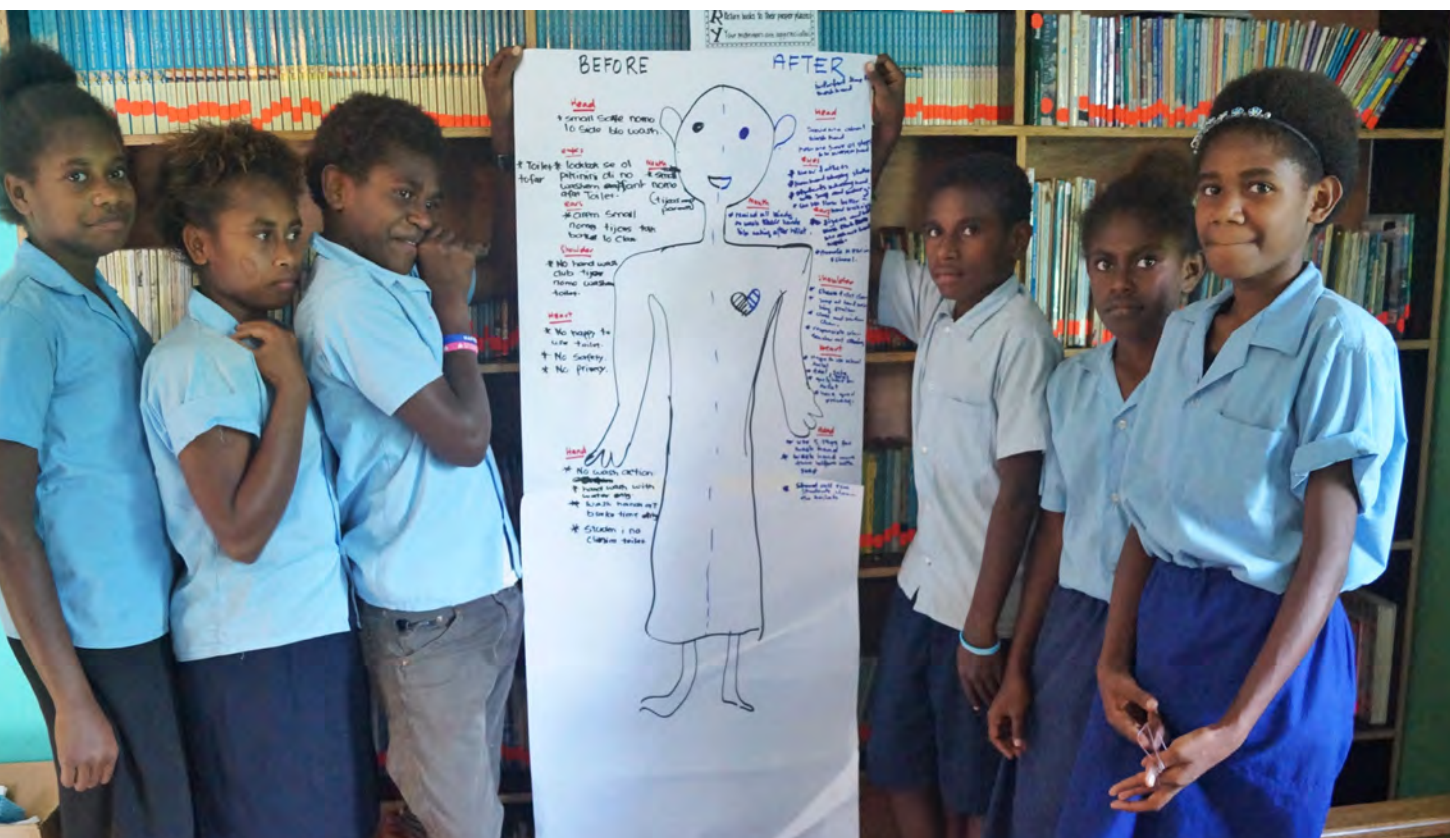
Effective strategies to foster ongoing participation by children in WASH activities that are used by schools visited for this publication include:

- Integrating age-appropriate education activities in classroom lessons
- Supervising behaviour practice in younger classes (group hand-washing, toilet use training)
- Selecting children from different age groups to participate in student WASH Clubs
- Getting older students to mentor and teach others through creative presentations and monitoring of toilets and hand-washing facilities
- Engaging children in creating large artistic key hygiene messages throughout schools – such as murals and signs – that include popular culture motifs, or religious themes
- Engaging children in beautification of toilets and hygiene facilities

Embedding these practices into the culture of the daily operation in school is key to extending the impact beyond short term focus events such as Global Hand-washing Day.

## Strategies to foster children's agency to engage in community and family WASH behaviour change:

Effective strategies to foster children's agency in the community and at home are still usually limited to teacher encouragement of students to speak up at home and fundraising for infrastructure such as more toilets or water tanks. In Fiji teachers in Natawa Primary School try to support the home-based advocacy of students for WASH by visiting families in the community to talk about WASH. Other teachers suggest including WASH in the topics for discussion during parent – teacher interviews. Several of the WASH in Schools resources used with children contain activities to initiate and build on family and community engagement, and schools are encouraged to use these resources to strengthen children's agency and engagement in WASH advocacy outside school.





# Approaches

Throughout this document the voices of children are shared through comments and quotes. These were taken from the feedback of selected children from the 17 schools who participated in focus group discussions and other reflection activities to discuss their engagement in WASH in Schools activities. The students were either members of student WASH Clubs, or students who had participated in WASH in Schools activities.

Other information included in this document was sourced through interviews conducted with school leaders such as head teachers, school principals, and hygiene teachers. A total of 23 interviews were conducted with school leaders. Teachers were also asked about the resources they use with children during class teaching on WASH and how schools work with student WASH Clubs or other types of student leadership.



The schools visited were:

Fiji	Kiribati	Solomon Islands	Vanuatu
Wainibuku School	Naibunaki School	Naha School	Erakor School
Rata Asaeu School	Taiwan School	Mbokonavera School	Melemaat School
Chauhan School	Sunrise School	Mbalasuna School	Olwie School
William Cross School	Mamatannana School	Mbokona School	
	Nun Teweia School	Tenavatu School	

The resources used by schools are discussed in relation to: specific focus of empowering children; specific behaviour change activities; providing guidance for gender; and social inclusion factors and providing guidance for children to engage as change agents at home and in their communities. This overview, combined with the voices of the children themselves, provides some practical guidance for improvement of engagement of children as agents of change through WASH in Schools programs.

The students participated in focus group discussions that used a Body Map as a focal point for reflection on the changes they have seen through their engagement in WASH in School activities. This activity uses a drawing in the shape of a body to represent a girl or boy from their community.



Each body part refers to a specific set of elements:

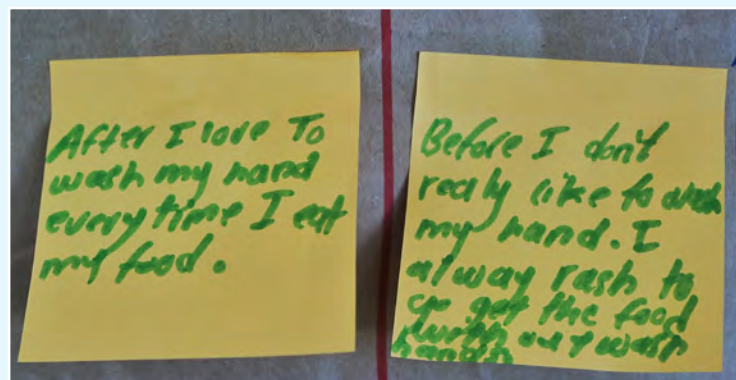
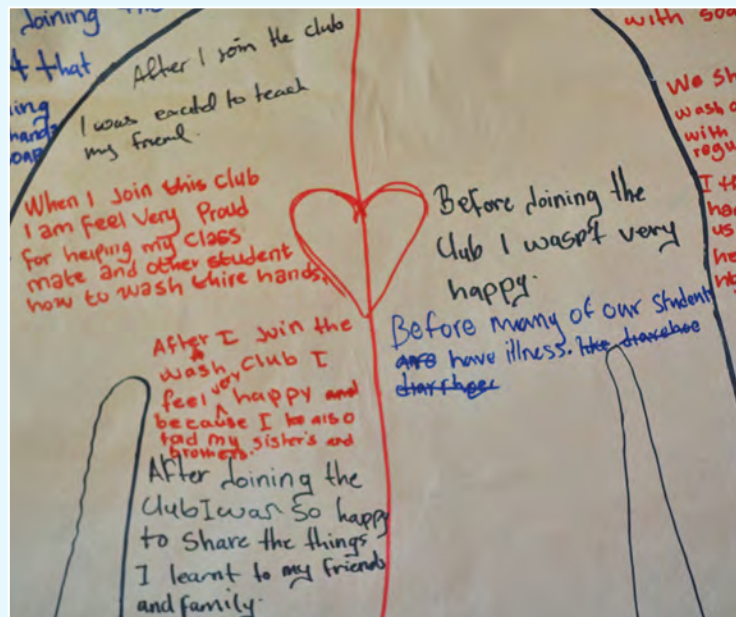
- the HEAD is knowledge acquired about WinS;
- the EYES are perceptions that adults have of children;
- the EARS refer to children's perceived ability to be listened to by adults;
- the MOUTH is about the ability of children to communicate effectively with peers, teachers and parents;
- the SHOULDERS refer to responsibilities that children have around WinS;
- the HEART refers to self-awareness and confidence that children have acquired through WinS activities.

Discussion explored changes that have happened for the children because of their participation in WinS activities. Children's responses were captured through notes written directly on the diagram by the students or facilitator, or stickers/post it notes written by the students themselves. The comments attributed to students throughout this report were collected during this activity in each of the 17 schools.

Also, opportunity was given to a girl and boy student in each school to be interviewed on video to answer some questions about what they felt were the most significant changes in how they promote healthy hygiene and safe sanitation in school, home and the community, and what changes they felt they have influenced. Girls and boys were also asked about the most significant change in their knowledge and thinking about menstruation hygiene management.

The compiled video of student responses is available to view here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/c815l4qbtX7mn6b/AADRu2xPMWsU7yMee-P37X66a?dl=0>



# Manuals & Toolkits used With Children

In Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu there is a range of toolkits and manuals that schools use with children to implement WASH in Schools activities. In Fiji the **WASH in Schools 3 Star Approach Guidebook** has been rolled out in more than 100 schools. The guide includes songs and games to play with students. Fiji also has the **Clean Hands Save Lives** manual for use in schools. The Fijian Teachers Association has also made six videos to share the experience of implementing the WASH in Schools program, including a video featuring children as agents of change.

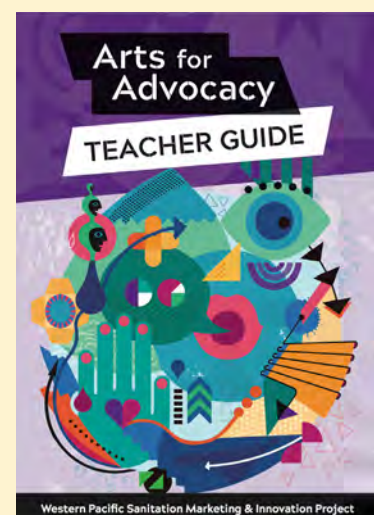
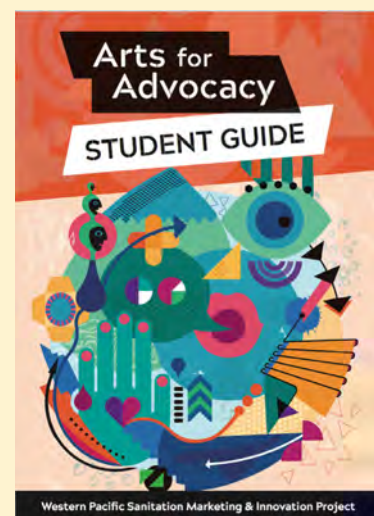
In Kiribati schools are using the **WASH Education Toolkit** toolkit developed for creating demand and sustain behaviour change practices. The toolkit comprises educational resources and materials including games and factsheets on menstruation. The materials cover three age groups of children: Year 1–2, Year 3–4 and Year 5–6.

In Vanuatu the Curriculum Development Unit has integrated **Hands Up for Hygiene, Germbuster Workbook** and student-led WASH Club **Arts for Advocacy** guides into the health and hygiene subject areas of the primary school curriculum and have translated the resources into Bislama and French. Other resources used with students include the 2016 collection of **WASH communications tools** that included a Hip-hop music DVD, WASH posters, songs, t-shirts, a calendar and other materials. Save the Children has also produced the school-focused **Haejin Promosen Aktiviti Manuel** in Bislama.

In Solomon Islands schools are using a mixture of WASH in Schools manuals, posters and arts-based student-led advocacy resources such as Hands Up for Hygiene, etc mentioned above, and UNICEF resources such as **WASH Story Books** for younger children.

In general, the manuals include the following different types of activities tailored for student participation:

- Establishing student WASH Clubs or WASH prefects
- Classroom-based hygiene education focused on washing hands with soap, general hygiene, using toilets, safe drinking water, puberty and menstruation, etc
- Involvement of students in keeping their school clean
- Presentation of creative, participatory activities for students including games, drama, songs, poems, dance, etc
- Suggestions for students to engage their peers, family and wider community in improve hygiene practice





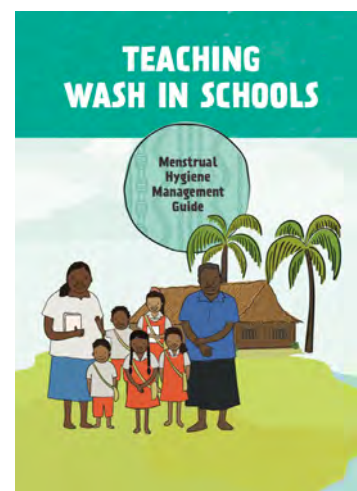


There seems to be limited independent documentation of the successes of the approaches. Some organisations have produced reviews or case studies.

On the following page is an overview of how the main manuals / toolkits in use across the four countries for engaging students in WinS programs address the following factors:

- Focus on students as agents of change and/or decision makers
- Practical ways to address the needs of girls and students with disabilities
- Targeted activities for specific behaviour changes (such as hand-washing with soap, or using toilets)
- Practical ways for students to engage their peers, family and the wider community

*See Annex 1 for a list of resources used in Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, with download information where available.*



## SUMMARY OF DIFFERENT ELEMENTS OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT RESOURCES

	Guide for students as agents of change / decision-makers	Guide to inclusion of girls and students with disability	Specific behaviour change focus	Guide for student engagement in community and home decisions	Languages Available
<b>Arts for Advocacy Guides</b>  (Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu)	Two guides focused on establishing student-led WASH Clubs to plan and implement WASH advocacy campaigns to influence peers, decision-makers and the community.	Teacher Guide contains a section on child participation, and reducing marginalisation of girls, children with disabilities, and other groups. Student Guide refers to child rights.	Focus on investigating and planning advocacy campaigns on safe toilets at school, washing hands with soap, and safe sanitation for girls.	Student-led step-by-step guide on creative advocacy campaigns targeting different audiences – including within and outside the school (students, teachers, parents, school leaders).	English French Bislama
<b>Clean Hands Save Lives</b>  (Fiji)	The manual contains information and activities developed by students. A pledge to wash their hands with soap at key times and remind their friends and family is central to the manual.	The focus is on hand-washing practice, with no mention of disability.	Includes poems, songs, and stories developed by Fijian students on washing hands with soap at key times. Also includes games, drama and dance activities to promote handwashing, and a recipe for soap solution.	Includes a student-led drama activity with scenarios for school, family and community.	English
<b>Hands Up for Hygiene with Germbuster Student Workbook</b>  (Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu)	Modules 3 and 4 include activities for students to map WASH access, discuss responsibilities for WASH in their school and document their concerns to share with school leadership. Workbook Focus on student individual handwashing behaviour.	Module 3 mentions accessible toilets but limited practical information. Module 5 discusses menstrual hygiene management. Disability or menstrual hygiene management not mentioned in the Germbuster workbook.	Modules 2, 3 and 4 focus on behaviour change for clean hands, using toilets and safe water storage. Germbuster workbook focused on hand washing and toilet use.	Module 2 includes activities focused on students working in teams to promote handwashing in their homes and communities. Module 6 discusses community support, and awareness activities. Germbuster workbook references mapping germ locations at home, in school and in community.	English French Bislama
<b>Haejin Promosen Aktiviti Manuel</b>  (Vanuatu)	Chapter 5 promotes pride in a “My beautiful school.” Student-focused learning outcomes and activities all focused in classroom and not linked to WASH Clubs or decision-making opportunities.	Chapter 3 discusses puberty and menstrual hygiene management. Chapter 4 discusses gender. Student-focused learning outcomes and activities, including how to conduct a simple gender analysis. No specific focus on disability inclusion.	Chapter 2 focused on hand-washing and overall good hygiene. Student-focused learning outcomes and activities focused on practical skills of when and how to wash hands, and how to instruct others	Chapter 4 includes example discussion questions on gender issues related to community WASH decision making.	Bislama
<b>WASH Education Toolkit</b>  (Kiribati)	Comprises teachers notes for Yr 1-2, Yr 3-4 and Yr 5-6 plus stories and student factsheets. Approach is teacher directed, linked to curriculum, with opportunities for students to be creative within boundaries set by the teacher.	Includes a guide and factsheet for students on male and female experience of puberty and initiations, and menstrual hygiene management. No specific focus on disability inclusion.	Age-specific activities for teachers to implement in classes focused on safe water, handwashing, hygiene and toilets. A discussion of climate change impact on water supply is included.	For older children some activities have a family or community focus. A sanitation mapping and public toilet activity is suggested to include community elders and influence community sanitation decisions.	English Kiribati (WASH Stories)
<b>WASH in Schools 3-Star Approach Guidebook</b>  (Fiji)	Recommends appointment of WASH prefects / monitors and gives structures for their engagement in WASH facilities monitoring.	Includes a section for teachers and school leadership on menstrual hygiene management and special / inclusive facilities. Annex 6 is a gender session for students with games. Annex 8 is a technical drawing for a toilet cubicle for children who use a wheelchair.	Includes a Health Living lesson plan focused on handwashing with soap. Includes poster on 8 steps of handwashing, two handwashing songs with links to YouTube, and posters on how to use toilets correctly.	Includes a section on community engagement that provides an example of a school resources map to engage parents and community.	English





# Strengthening Student Leadership in WASH

## Student WASH Clubs & Student Prefects

Schools in Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu primarily use group or individual focused methods for engaging students. In Kiribati, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu schools have established student WASH or Hygiene Clubs. In Fiji some schools don't have student WASH Clubs but appoint individual students as WASH or Hygiene prefects or monitors. In Vanuatu some schools have WASH Clubs and also student monitors. Student WASH Clubs or Prefects are engaged in a wide variety of activities, primarily related to monitoring WASH cleanliness and maintenance of facilities at the school, mentoring younger children to wash their hands with soap, making presentations at school assemblies, and leading out in activities for global emphasis days (such as Global Handwashing Day and World Toilet Day).

“When they introduced the WASH Club I know that washing our hands is important for our life”  
– student at Naha School, Solomon Islands

Student WASH clubs are formed in different ways, based on the school context or preference of the WASH Club support teacher. Variations include:

- Teachers appointing representatives from selected classes in the schools (usually older students)
- Teachers asking for students to sign up to the WASH Club if they are interested
- All students at a school being involved in one of a variety of student WASH and/or health clubs implemented by the school

The **Arts for Advocacy Teacher & Student Guides** give step-by-step directions for setting up student-led WASH Clubs in a school, and provides some guidance to students on the general operations of their club, and how to consider inclusion, planning, meetings, etc. Other resources used by schools (discussed in the previous section) recommend establishing WASH Clubs but leave it to schools to determine the process and structure.

Most schools visited seem to operate the Student WASH Clubs as an extension of the teacher – student relationship, with strong direction and oversight of WASH Club activities provided by teachers. Specific training for WASH Clubs is generally not provided – other than in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu where student WASH Clubs have participated in Arts for Advocacy training. In other schools WASH Club members participate in overall hygiene education for students that focus on general hygiene messages, how to use toilets, how to wash hands, or specific instructions for toilet cleaning work and duty rosters.



## Opportunities for self-organisation by students:

The self-organisation potential of the students can be limited by well-meaning or enthusiastic champion teachers, even though students are regularly given opportunities to make presentations at school assemblies or supervise other students. A big focus of the daily activities of WASH Club members appears to be supervision of other students:



*“The older ones check after the young ones use the toilets to make sure they are using it properly. They provide a pass card for each class, for when a student needs to use the toilet. The WASH club member will accompany the student with the pass card to check the facilities afterwards and make sure the students know how to properly use the toilet.”*  
Namatanna Primary School, Kiribati

*“The role of wash prefects is to monitor individual classes. They also oversee students at lunchtimes, standing near the tap area to see if they are washing their hands. At lunch they support other classes. They check that toilets are clean every morning and that soap is there.”* Chauhan Primary School, Fiji

*“We involve the children in a duty roster (one class each week) to wash the toilet, sweep, pick up rubbish, etc. The WASH Club monitors their work, and if the class doesn't do a good job then the WASH Club members inform the duty roster teacher.”* Olwie Primary School, Vanuatu

*“We have a ‘Sanitation Mobile Group’ with a daily program to check the toilets are clean and that there is toilet paper and soap. This group includes both students and teachers. This group is under the supervision of the WASH Club.”* Erakor Primary School, Vanuatu

In several schools students were proud of being in a WASH Club, and teachers have noticed this – in Sarasawati School in Fiji the Head Teacher commented: *“The WASH Club members have badges that they are very proud of. They are upheld during school assemblies and are awarded certificates at the end of semester.”*

In some schools, WASH Clubs were established by a previous Head Teacher, who was then transferred to another school. The new Head Teacher may not be familiar with the WASH in Schools program, or as supportive, so the WASH Club function can falter. But if there are good WASH champions in the school, and students are proud of their engagement the WASH Club sustainability can be stronger. The WASH Club in Mbokonavera School in Solomon Islands continued to operate with the support of a dedicated hygiene teacher, and when a new Head Teacher was appointed the WASH Club engaged him and brought him into their activities – resulting in an active student WASH Club and excellent school WASH facilities two years later. In Erakor School in Vanuatu the Principal transferred to the school in 2019. He came from a school with no WASH program and was introduced to the WinS program running in the school since 2016. He commented: *“I was very surprised to see the children keep asking for soap to wash their hands.”*

Students in all schools and locations before the WinS activities mentioned the lack of responsibility they felt towards WASH. Due to the limited understanding of the importance of WASH and maintaining WASH facilities, students did not actively contribute to many (if any) WASH duties. In Fiji many of the students stated that their main responsibilities were to tend to the garden and classroom and keep the school clean by picking up rubbish. In Vanuatu it was commonly noted that before the programme there was no hygiene teacher, no WASH clubs, no soap to wash hands and nobody to clean the toilets. Students commented that they had no responsibility for WASH at all.

This changed through engagement in the WASH Clubs. In Fiji a student commented that, “Today we have more responsibilities yet we are happy to do them so we can have a beautiful clean school campus.” The interviews with the teachers and the discussions with students in the schools visited indicated that both girl and boy students are involved in cleaning toilets – the work is either allocated to specific classes through duty rosters, or to the student WASH Club.

“Soap is a responsibility of the parents and WASH Club. The WASH Club is also responsible to purchase toilet deodorant, provide spare underwear and modess and to report on maintenance needed. Fundraising is also a responsibility of the WASH club”

– student at Taiwan School, Kiribati



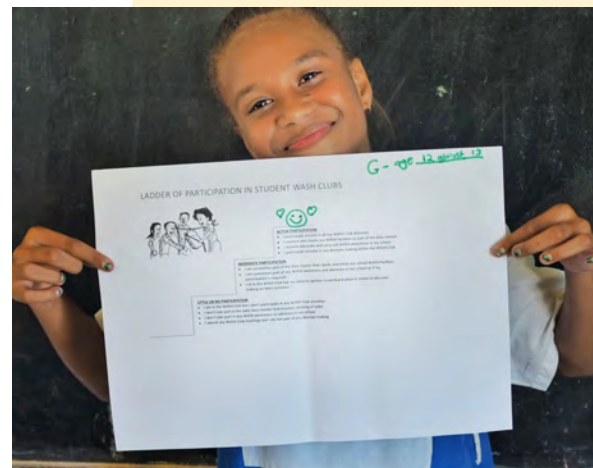


# Student Self-Assessment of Participation in WASH Clubs

Students in schools with active WASH Clubs completed a “WASH Club Participation Ladder” sheet. The criteria for self-assessment was:

## Active participation

- I participate actively in all our WASH Club activities
- I monitor and checks our WASH facilities as part of the duty roster
- I actively advocate and carry out WASH awareness in my school
- I participate actively in any decision making within the WASH Club



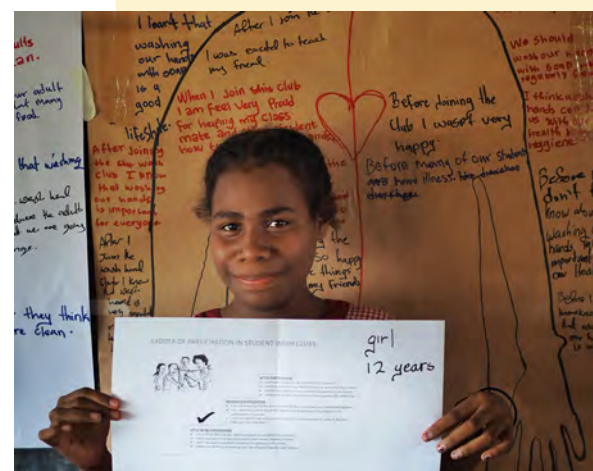
## Moderate participation

- I participate very little in the WASH Club activities
- I am sometimes part of the duty roster that checks and clean our school WASH facilities
- I am sometimes part of any WASH awareness and advocacy in my school or if my participation is required
- I sit in the WASH Club but my voice or opinion is not heard when it comes to decision making on WinS activities



## Little or no participation

- I am in the WASH Club but I don't participate in any WASH Club activities
- I don't take part in the daily duty roster that involves cleaning of toilet
- I don't take part in any WASH awareness or advocacy in my school
- I attend any WASH Club meetings but I am not part of any decision making



The students were reassured that there were no right or wrong answers for this activity and that all types of participation were ok. Just on half (52%) of the students selected **Active Participation**. Some 35% of students selected **Moderate Participation**. A summary of responses by country and sex is given below:

**Percentage of students who selected Active Participation 52% (24)**

**Percentage of girls 54% (13)**

**Percentage of boys 46% (11)**

**Percentage of students who selected Moderate Participation 35% (16)**

**Percentage of girls 56% (9)**

**Percentage of boys 44% (7)**

**Total responses – 46 (Girls 24 Boys 22)**

Country	Sex	Active Participation	Moderate Participation	Little or No Participation	
Solomon Islands	Boys	6	3	3	<b>12</b>
	Girls	6	5	1	<b>12</b>
Kiribati	Boys	3	1	1	<b>5</b>
	Girls	3	1	1	<b>5</b>
Fiji	Boys	1	1	0	<b>2</b>
	Girls	4	1	0	<b>5</b>
Vanuatu	Boys	1	2	0	<b>3</b>
	Girls	0	2	0	<b>2</b>
		<b>24</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>46</b>

“I don’t feel scared to go to the school toilets” – student at Tenavatu School, Solomon Islands

“The toilet is now safe because it is closer to the school and has a door, the girls and boys have their own toilets and we have privacy” – student at Olwie School, Vanuatu

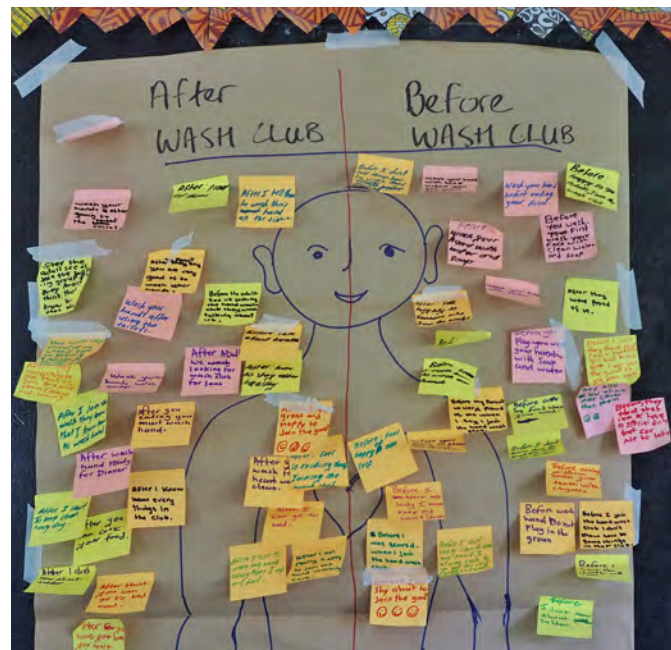
“After I join the club I was excited to teach my friends” – student at Naha School, Solomon Islands

“We see lots of change and we really like the change in our school and are proud of it” – student at Sunrise School, Kiribati

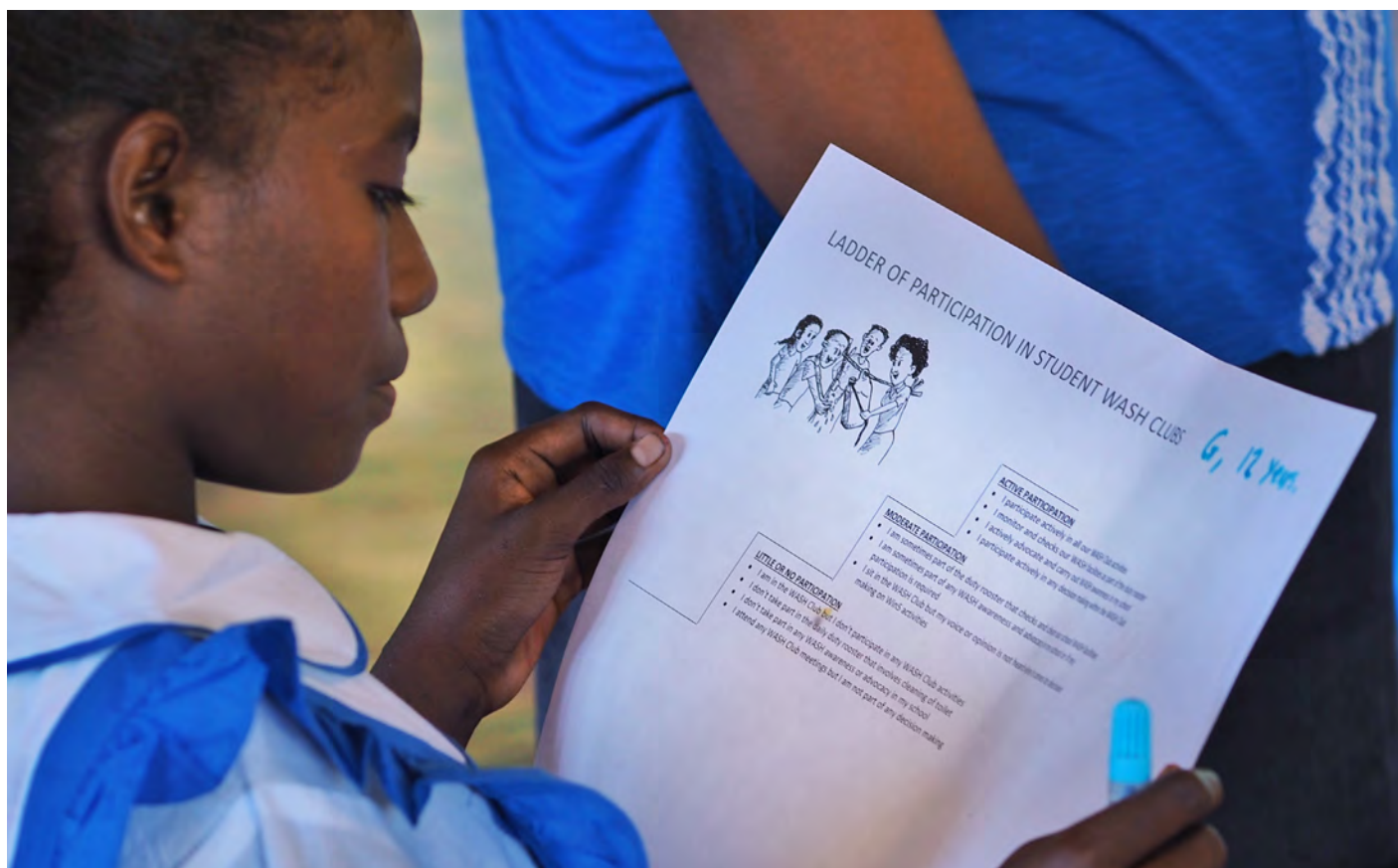


Many of the responses concerning the situation before the WinS programme discussed the poor health of the students. In Kiribati one student said, **“We were always sick at school from diarrhoea, flu, fever, headache. We were uncomfortable!”**

Not only was poor health often mentioned but also the general unhappiness of the students. Many of the responses from Vanuatu commented on the condition of the toilet facilities, saying they were unhappy to use them because they were very dirty and there was no privacy. For students in Kiribati there was no access to safe drinking water at school, the students were drinking coconut water or sugar water/karewe instead, or being forced to bring water from home or to go home to get something to drink. One comment from Kiribati said that it was, **“It was so hard toileting under the sun and we were always thirsty.”**



Many students reported feeling happy after joining a WASH Club, and felt excited to teach their friends and share their knowledge. A feeling of empowerment could be seen among student responses, with many of the comments reflecting the student’s personal sense of pride. A common theme was pride in the cleanliness of schools and WASH facilities, including the toilets.



# Children's Influence on WASH at home & in the community

Discussions with children demonstrated clear understanding of water, sanitation and hygiene challenges in their homes and communities. Students talked about asking their parents for soap at home for washing hands or observing adults and others in the community not having a toilet or washing their hands with soap. Teachers talked about their own children reminding them to wash their hands after using the toilet, and about parents visiting the school to ask about the WASH program following students changing their practice at home or requesting access to water and soap at home to duplicate practices learned at schools.

“*We see parents participating in cleaning the school*”

– student at Taiwan School, Kiribati

“*The children are the most influential in the program.... The children do the practice of washing hands in schools, and then they do the practice at home and tell their parents that they should be doing the same at home. Parents have been coming to the school and asking about the WASH program.*” Olwie Primary School, Vanuatu

“*Attendance at school has increased because students like using the toilets at school. Parents have said that their children want their own toilets at home.*” Nun Teweia School, Kiribati

“*Parents have said that when children go home they are washing their hands before eating and encouraging their families to do so.*” Sunrise Primary School, Kiribati

“*Parents come to thank the teachers, they can see the change in their child. Now students are asking for WASH facilities at home, but it can be difficult for parents to provide.*” Chauhan Primary School, Fiji

Students demonstrated clear knowledge, and confidence to talk about these issues to others outside the school. In Kiribati some teachers commented that students have discussed WASH with the local elders and have engaged their parents as volunteers in improving WASH facilities in their school.





## Changes mentioned by children in how adults perceive their personal hygiene

Prior to the WinS programme teachers commented that students appeared ‘unhygienic’ with ‘unhealthy practices.’ Positive hygiene practices were not known by the students. They often improperly used the WASH facilities and failed to report if something was broken or needed maintenance. When students from Kiribati talked about toilet use they were told to use the beach and mentioned that community members would “**complain about dirty and smelly children, while others would laugh at them.**” Many students reported feeling ‘too shy’ or ‘ashamed’ to talk about WASH and personal hygiene with teachers or peers.

“**We really like our school and we ask our parents to provide the same at home.....We also ask our parents to provide toilets, tippy taps/ guttering/drink boiled water, and to clean the well water at home**”

– student at Mamatannana School, Kiribati

After participation in the program students spoke of being “**changed persons.**” Frequent hand washing was observed in many cases, and the students appeared cleaner and in better health across all locations. The noticeable change in students behaviour and cleanliness was a common theme in teacher interviews. In the Solomon Islands one student noted, “**After WASH club was introduced the adults around us see that we keep our body clean.**” Students also started seeing the participation of adults in their communities, who were learning about positive WASH practices through them. It was common for students to speak about this change with pride, commenting about their healthy appearance to adults.

## Changes mentioned by children in how adults listen to them

Students said that before the WinS program they rarely talked about WASH at home, at school or with their friends. According to one teacher interview in Fiji, the sanitation complaints and needs of students were largely ignored and students were rarely listened to and their opinions were not taken seriously when they tried to pass on information to teachers or parents.

Following the establishment of WASH activities in schools, a student response from Fiji claimed that they now felt “**confident talking about WASH and girls menstruation.**” A clear change is seen with students now speaking up for what they want, helping and reminding each other to perform WASH duties and feeling comfortable discussing WASH at home and at school. A student response from Kiribati stated, “**We really like our school and we ask our parents to provide the same at home.**”

Reporting the faults and maintaining WASH facilities became more commonplace, and students now use and replace the soap at hand washing stations. One student in Kiribati said: “**We find that the village leaders are taking time to check household for toilet, pigpen, water well and hand wash stations.**” Students no longer felt “**too scared to talk**” anymore and were actively taking part in WASH duties with peers, teachers, family and community members.

“**Now I tell others how to keep toilets clean**”

– student at Tenavatu School, Solomon Islands

“**There is a lot of sharing at home, with my peers and teachers at school about WASH**”

– student at William Cross School, Fiji

# Teacher-led Approaches with Students & Parents



During the interviews teachers were named the most influential people in a school concerning safe water, sanitation and hygiene. Teachers in the schools in all four countries visited provide direct support to student WASH Clubs, supervise classes to clean the school toilets, and provide support for organizing key inputs to whole-of-school global advocacy days, such as Global Handwashing Day or World Toilet Day.

Many of the interviews in schools from all the four countries visited in this study mentioned teachers as having the most influence on student behaviour change – either through regular supervision of group hand-washing activities, physical inspections of student hands, reminders to students about toilet use, and (for many younger students) showing children how to use a water-based toilet with a seat.

“The teachers play a vital role because the children listen to them. Telling the students, showing them, being a model. Children do what they see the teachers do.” Sarasawati School, Fiji

“Students are learning how to use the toilet correctly from the teachers. At home the students do not have similar WASH facilities as they do at school. Teachers demonstrate how to use facilities, how to clean up after themselves, hand-washing is also demonstrated.” Wainibuku School, Fiji



Supervising group hand-washing with soap at established times is a key teacher-led activity. Different schools establish different times for supervised group hand-washing. For example, Mbalasuna School in Solomon Islands conducts whole-of-school supervised group hand-washing in the morning when students arrive before class, and before eating food at break time. In Chauhan School in Fiji teachers and prefects supervise group hand-washing before eating at lunch time. In Sunrise School in Kiribati supervised student group hand-washing is done before eating.

Teachers are also highly engaged in whole school advocacy and awareness activities for global days such as Global Handwashing Day, Menstrual Hygiene Management Day, World Toilet Day, etc. These activities are good opportunities to re-emphasise key hygiene messages but were not mentioned specifically by teachers during interviews.

## School-led interactions with parents

School and teacher-led approaches and interaction with parents are important. In Fiji parents are engaged through the Community & Parents Meeting (CAP). In Vanuatu parents are engaged through the Parent Teacher Association, which operates with varying success in different schools. In Solomon Islands schools also have a Parent Teacher Association, which is reportedly difficult to engage with in large urban schools. Rural schools receive more support from parents. In Fiji, teachers in some schools recommend including information about the WASH program in the school in the scheduled parent-teacher conferences.

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*“For anything to be operating to the maximum level we need support from as many people as possible, including outsiders. At the moment it is just the teachers, the children and the handyman. Slowly the parents might come in. We still need to understand the parents and what might be stopping or troubling them.”* St Peter Channel Primary School, Fiji

*“The level of participation of parents through the school is due to teachers visiting communities and sharing knowledge with parents and community members about the importance of the WASH program.”* Chauhan Primary School, Fiji



# Participation opportunities for girls & children with special needs

## Participation opportunities for girls:

Overall, schools are providing excellent opportunities for girls to participate in WASH in Schools activities, and to lead out in these activities in the school. All 17 schools visited included girls and boys in multiple ways – from monitoring toilet conditions, to leading out in supervising group hand-washing activities with younger students and implementing different activities for days such as Global Handwashing Day, or World Water Day. Teacher and students also discussed the value of special sessions for girls concerning menstruation hygiene management. During a special discussion group with girls at Olwie School in Vanuatu the principal was surprised to find that very few of the girls had previously discussed menstruation with their mothers or aunties. All schools now provide access to sanitary pads for girls, and all schools have made some effort at making menstruation easier to manage at school – from special MHM bathrooms in Fiji to simply putting a bin for used sanitary pads in the girls toilets in Solomon Islands. Most of the schools visited were aware of the importance of adequate MHM facilities for girls and were implementing incremental improvements.



## Participation opportunities for children with special needs:

Children with disabilities or special needs are not attending mainstream schools. Education opportunities for children with disabilities is very limited in Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Fiji has some dedicated special education schools, which were not included in the schools visited for this publication. Some schools had started improving the accessibility of their toilets, with schools in Fiji making the most progress.

Interviews with school management and head teachers found that these schools are not explicitly acting to ensure the access to and participation in schools by children with disabilities. Head Teachers interviewed across all schools visited responded to this issue in one of two ways:

1. That the school was not set up for children with special needs (no support staff, no facilities, etc) so these children shouldn't attend the school
2. That there were children with special needs in the community who were not attending school and the only option was the local school, so they had commenced discussions in the school board.





Some Head Teachers assumed that if a child is injured (for example, needing crutches) then the child would not attend school until the injury was healed. In Olwie School, Vanuatu, the principal admitted that the school currently doesn't serve students who have to use crutches or a wheelchair, but the school board was making plans to address this. In discussing accessibility, the teachers were focused on physical accessibility, and not on discussing the participation of children with special needs in other activities.

In Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu schools can be nominated as official evacuation centres. The head teacher from Sarasawati Primary School in Fiji commented that they are an official evaluation centre but don't have accessible toilets for community members during evacuations.

## Children's perspectives on exclusion and marginalisation:

During the school visits students participated in an open general discussion on their experiences of exclusion, marginalisation and changes for the future:

1. Are any girls or boys facing discrimination from other children or adults due to their gender, age, disability, ethnicity, religion, family income or any other reasons?
2. Are there any differences in the way young people are listened to or involved in decision making due to their gender, age, sibling order, disability, ethnicity, religion, family income or any other reasons?
3. What changes would the WASH Club members like to see as a result of their WASH advocacy activities?

The depth of answers given to these topics varied significantly depending on the age of the students participating. The questions and responses were left open-ended, as the purpose of the discussion was to explore the issues of social inclusion that may not have been included in the specific WinS activities done in each school.





## QUESTION:

***Are any girls or boys facing discrimination from other children or adults due to their gender, age, disability, ethnicity, religion, family income or any other reasons?***

Discrimination was rarely mentioned among Fiji's responses, with the exception of discrimination when girls are menstruating (who were teased and disrespected by male students) and the lack of accessible facilities for students. The toilets in particular were inappropriate, with most schools not having facilities that were that were inclusive or friendly for children with special needs. Girls also felt that they needed more support for menstrual hygiene management at school.

In the Solomon Islands, age-related issues were extremely prevalent, mostly due to the nature of having joint primary and high schools. It was common for students to comment on the discrimination that younger students felt from older students at school, who were often unkind to them. Some students have also discriminated against WASH Club members for wanting to wash their hands before eating, teasing them about wanting to be clean. Disrespect that children were shown at home by older family members, such as parents, was also a point of note for students from the Solomon Islands. Several mentioned that their parents had not listened to them or taken them seriously when they tried to share positive hygiene practices at home.



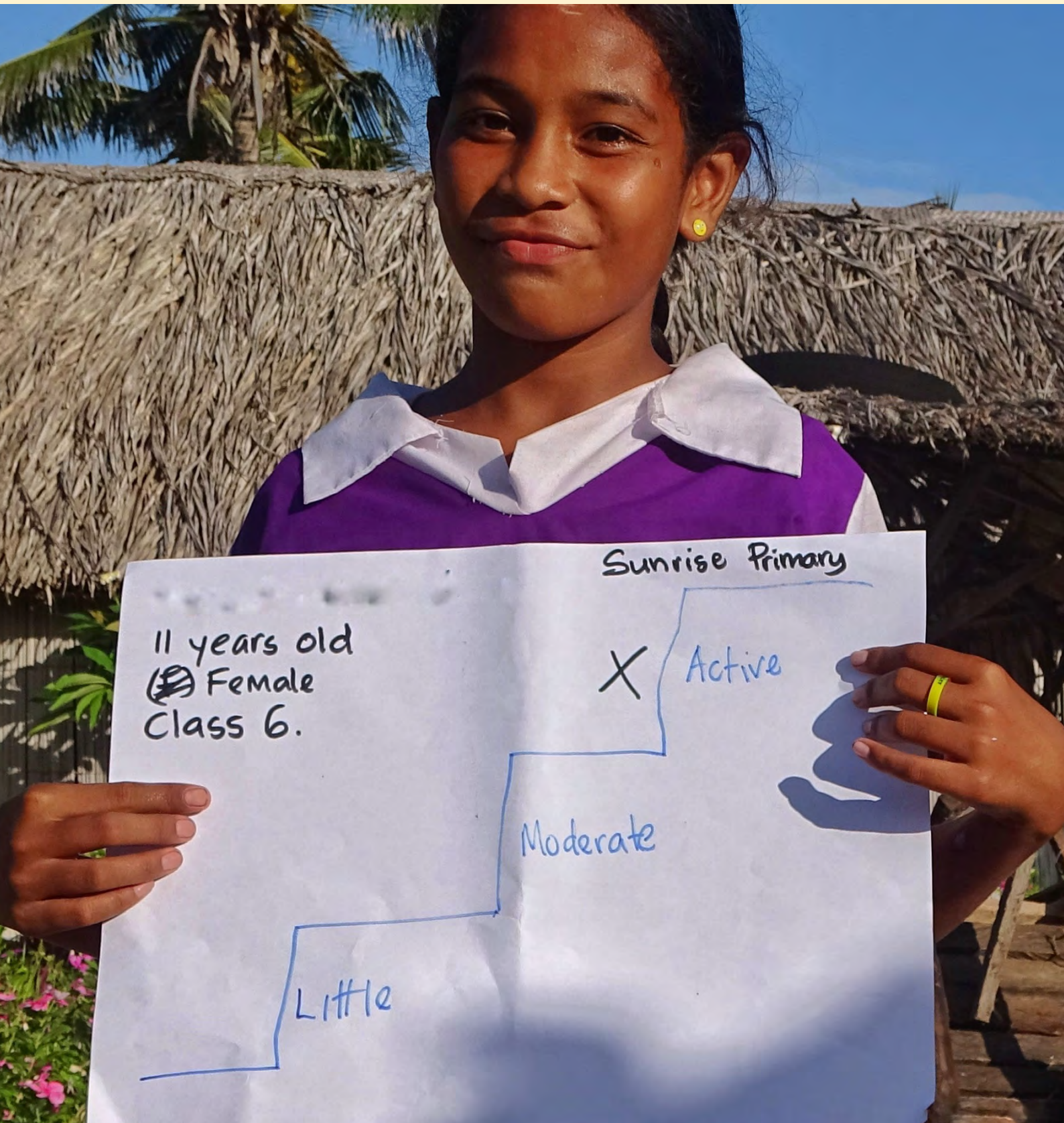
## QUESTION:

***Are there any differences in the way young people are listened to or involved in decision making due to their gender, age, sibling order, disability, ethnicity, religion, family income or any other reasons?***

In Fiji it was noted that little attention was given to students as they do not have platforms to voice their concerns, except at home to parents and in informal/open sessions. Students do not sit in meetings with teachers, school management or parents to discuss WASH and are not invited to share opinions.

One comment stated that "culture drawback hinders active child participation." The general situation is similar in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, with children traditionally seen as lower in community hierarchy structures. That said, students are given opportunities at selected times to lead out (for example, emphasis days such as Global Handwashing Day in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu), and in some schools students in the WASH Club are asked to speak at student assemblies.







# What is working with children's engagement in WASH in Schools advocacy or behaviour change?

## Strategies to foster ongoing participation and involvement of children in WASH activities as they move through the school:

The 17 schools visited across Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu have responded well to the different elements of the WASH in Schools programs that have been promoted. Effective strategies to foster ongoing participation by children in WASH activities that are used by schools visited for this publication include:

- Integrating age-appropriate education activities in classroom lessons
- Supervising behaviour practice in younger classes (group hand-washing, toilet use training)
- Selecting children from different age groups to participate in student WASH Clubs
- Getting older students to mentor and teach others through creative presentations and monitoring of toilets and hand-washing facilities
- Engaging children in creating large artistic key hygiene messages throughout schools – such as murals and signs – that include popular culture motifs, or religious themes
- Engaging children in beautification of toilets and hygiene facilities





Use of visual “nudges” to remind students to use toilets, wash hands with soap at critical times and to take care of sanitation and hygiene facilities is common in the schools visited in the four countries.

Students are usually engaged in producing these artistic murals and hygiene messages. The creative messaging uses popular culture motifs (such as the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles in Fiji) and religious themes (popular sayings such as “Cleanliness is next to Godliness”).



Many of the schools also engaged the children in creative beautification of toilets and hygiene facilities. For example, in Kiribati a school with toilet buildings constructed of local materials is decorated with shiny – purple and yellow empty snack and noodle packets. Another school has woven love heart patterns into the door frames of toilets. Many schools have planted flowers near to toilet buildings, and near the run-off from group hand-washing stations.

Embedding these practices into the culture of the school is key to extending the impact beyond short term focus events (such as Global Hand-washing Day). Embedding them into the culture of the school requires ownership and engagement by school management from the outset, and as many teaching staff engaged in WASH in Schools in-service activities as possible, so that the different WinS elements remain operating as teachers are transferred to other schools, and as different cohorts of students move through the school.



Teachers are nominated as having the highest influence on their students. Utilising child-focused resources in schools, such as the **Arts for Advocacy** training manuals, will better equip teachers to be facilitators of child-led initiatives, in addition to being the directors of WASH activities implemented by children. There is potential to see the impact of formalizing this in Vanuatu, where the Arts for Advocacy resource and other resources are being translated into Bislma and French for implementation as part of the formal school curriculum. Creative teachers also find interesting ways to integrate WASH behaviours into their teaching. Enabling a mechanism for teachers to share their creative ideas through joint in-service sessions (such as conducted by some organisations in Solomon Islands) or collecting and publishing creative ideas for teachers will improve quality participation and engagement of children.

## Strategies to foster children's agency to engage in community and family WASH behaviour change:

Effective strategies to foster children's agency in the community and at home are still usually limited to teacher encouragement of students to speak up at home and fundraising for infrastructure such as more toilets or water tanks. In Fiji teachers in Natawa Primary School try to support the home-based advocacy of students for WASH by visiting families in the community to talk about WASH. Other teachers suggest including WASH in the topics for discussion during parent – teacher interviews.

Several of the WASH in Schools resources used with children contain activities to initiate and build on family and community engagement, and schools are encouraged to use these resources to strengthen children's agency and engagement in WASH advocacy outside school.

Schools that are operated by churches can integrate health presentations by the children into community or church congregation meetings. Children can also accompany the local health centre personnel on health education outreach visits in the community (as observed in Milne Bay Province, Papua New Guinea in the Rait Mama, Rait Famili project).

## Challenges for the future:

Students in all the 17 schools visited demonstrated clear knowledge about washing hands with soap at key times, and knowledge of why they have to use a toilet and how to use a toilet. Across the four countries, the primary school students also spoke of how important it was to them to have clean toilets that work well and where they feel safe. They also talked about the importance of washing hands with soap at critical times. When this knowledge is combined with access to sufficient water and facilities students also demonstrate appropriate behaviour.

But sustainability challenges in the schools can affect children's engagement. For this report, the schools that had secure water supply and active adult champions still had clean toilets and students demonstrating hand-washing practice, and the students were keen advocates for improved WASH behaviour. The schools that had issues with water supply or had experienced changes in senior leadership and didn't have teachers who were WASH champions still had students who demonstrated knowledge and desire to practice but were not able to maintain the positive behaviours that they established a few years earlier.

This was the case in in Solomon Islands. Of the five schools visited in Solomon Islands, only two of them had secure water supplies and were conducting group hand-washing with students. The other three schools all had group hand-washing stations in the school but relied on tank water that was empty. In Kiribati teachers at one school mentioned that when they received regular visits by an external agency they kept the momentum in the program, but now they were on their own they weren't supervising student hand-washing as they should. In Vanuatu a head teacher said it can be difficult to keep up with the water supply bill, and that the school was spending too much money on soap. In Fiji one school mentioned problems with losing bar soap and wanted to have liquid soap dispensers on the wall. When schools face challenges with water supply, or school leadership changes and the emphasis on WinS is reduced, then student knowledge remains, but practice and engagement can falter. The other challenge facing schools is the skills, planning and funding needed to improve accessibility and participation of children with special needs.





# Annex

## Resource Links

Resources used with students in schools in Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, with download information where available.

RESOURCE	DOWNLOAD LINK
<b>Arts for Advocacy Guides</b> (Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu)	<b>Student Guide:</b> <a href="https://livelearn.org/what/resources/arts-advocacy-student-guide">https://livelearn.org/what/resources/arts-advocacy-student-guide</a>  <b>Teacher Guide:</b> <a href="https://livelearn.org/what/resources/arts-advocacy-teacher-guide">https://livelearn.org/what/resources/arts-advocacy-teacher-guide</a>
<b>Clean Hands Save Lives</b> (Fiji)	<a href="https://livelearn.org/what/resources/clean-hands-save-lives">https://livelearn.org/what/resources/clean-hands-save-lives</a>
<b>Hands Up for Hygiene with Gerbuster Student Workbook</b> (Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu)	<b>Hands Up for Hygiene Teacher Guide</b> <a href="https://livelearn.org/what/resources/hands-hygiene">https://livelearn.org/what/resources/hands-hygiene</a>  <b>Gerbuster Student Workbook</b> <a href="https://livelearn.org/what/resources/germ-buster-student-workbook">https://livelearn.org/what/resources/germ-buster-student-workbook</a>  <b>School WASH Posters &amp; Games</b> <a href="https://livelearn.org/what/resources/germs-ladders-game">https://livelearn.org/what/resources/germs-ladders-game</a> <a href="https://livelearn.org/what/resources/healthy-habits-stickers">https://livelearn.org/what/resources/healthy-habits-stickers</a> <a href="https://livelearn.org/what/resources/pacific-wash-handwashing-posters">https://livelearn.org/what/resources/pacific-wash-handwashing-posters</a>
<b>Haejin Promosen Aktiviti Manuel</b> (Vanuatu)	<a href="https://livelearn.org/what/resources/fiji-3-star-manual-vanuatu-haejin-paromosen-manuel">https://livelearn.org/what/resources/fiji-3-star-manual-vanuatu-haejin-paromosen-manuel</a>
<b>WASH Education Toolkit</b> (Kiribati)	<a href="https://livelearn.org/what/resources/kiribati-wash-schools-toolkit">https://livelearn.org/what/resources/kiribati-wash-schools-toolkit</a>
<b>WASH in Schools 3-Star Approach Guidebook</b> (Fiji)	<a href="https://livelearn.org/what/resources/fiji-3-star-manual-vanuatu-haejin-paromosen-manuel">https://livelearn.org/what/resources/fiji-3-star-manual-vanuatu-haejin-paromosen-manuel</a>
<b>WASH in Schools Kiribati videos</b>	<a href="https://bsins3.wixsite.com/washinschools/watch-learn">https://bsins3.wixsite.com/washinschools/watch-learn</a>







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*Kiribati, Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu*

October 2019