



# WASH in Schools (WinS) Programme in the Philippines: Better Alignment of Policy and Management Changed the WinS Landscape.

## SUMMARY

A very centralized Department of Education (DepED) in the Philippines adopted a decentralized approach by giving all the responsibilities to school principals to adjust the school's needs and implement a phased approach of the WASH in Schools programme. Since Typhoon Haiyan's emergency response, addressing water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) needs has become a priority for the Education Officials at division, province and national levels. The support of key champions with their long-standing field experience, technical knowledge and reputation have guided the government's decision making through an active WinS Technical Working Group.

## Introduction

The Republic of the Philippines is considered an emerging economy with a GDP just above USD330 billion (World Bank 2018). Although 33% of the population live out of agriculture, industry and services are growing rapidly accounting altogether for more than 90% of the country's economy.

With approximately 7,100 islands spread across the archipelago, more than 50% of the population live in rural areas. The geographical and cultural diversity of the more than 100 million Filipinos and its inequitable socio-economic development, provide different contexts that require contextualized solutions to addressing its development gaps.

The Philippines is prone to disasters, both natural and human-made. An average of 20 typhoons

and tropical storms hit the islands annually; earthquakes and volcanic eruptions are also frequent. Long-running armed conflicts have aggravated the gaps and have hindered sustainable improvements in some sectors.

In the Philippines, more than 33 million people are under 14 yrs and 13 million children attend primary school in more than 45,000 schools. In 2016, the Department of Education (DepED) had a budget of USD 9.54 billion, which accounted for 14.5% of the government's total budget for that year (Philippines Statistics Authority, 2016), and yet, 39% of the public primary schools in the country do not have access to a basic water service and 63% have limited or no access to basic sanitation (JMP 2016, 2018)

Despite the fact that DepED is very centralized, the Philippines laws and regulations provide

schools with institutional mechanisms such as the School Based Management approach, known as School Based Management (SBM), which allows them to localize the application of National Guidelines, so that they can be implemented taking into account the specificities of each community. SBM was never broadly used for implementing WASH in schools (WinS) until 2014, when the massive effort to rehabilitate the areas hit by Typhoon Haiyan in regions VI and VIII in the Visayas, in Central Philippines gained momentum.

The need for an emergency response that would ensure the sustainability of the interventions provided the strategic setting for designing and piloting new approaches for scaling up and improving sustainable access to WinS.

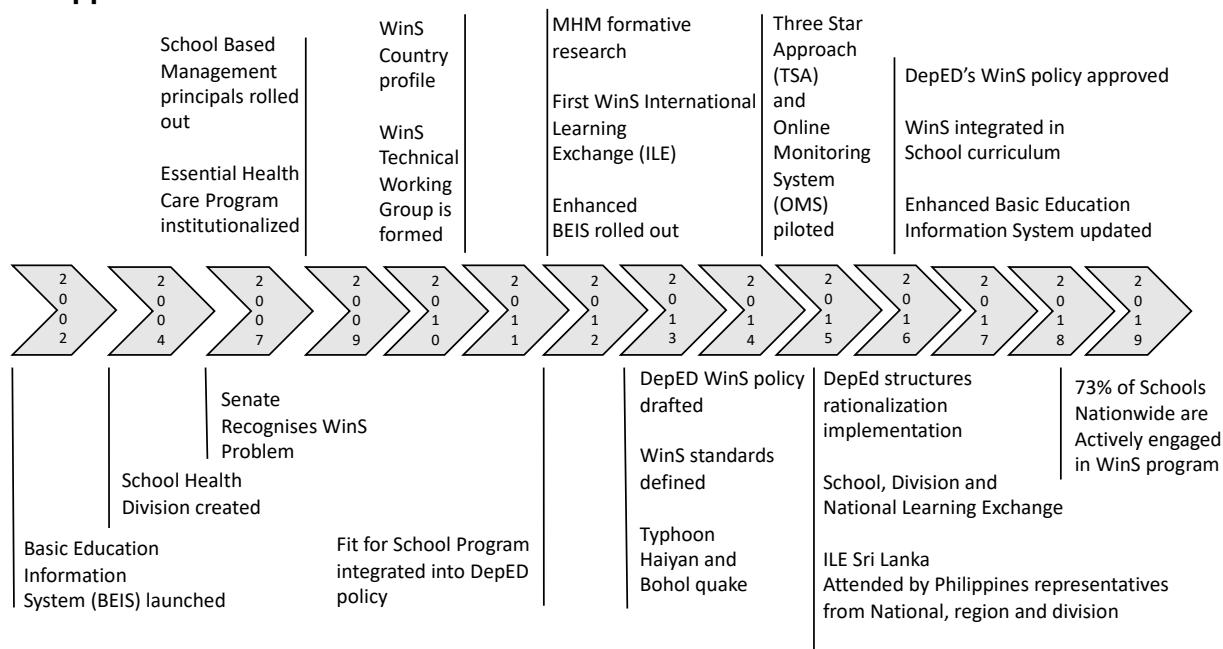
Champions from different disciplines (i.e. WASH, school health, social science, information systems and organizational development) at different positions in national and international organizations and at the DepED provided advice for implementing an effective WinS programme.

## Description of Interventions

Fundamental factors have shaped an enabling environment for the scale up of an effective and sustainable WinS programme in the Philippines. The following have been key:

- Formulation of a WinS policy and the development of standards have guided implementation of WinS in the country.
- Adaption of the phased Three Star Approach for WinS and development of implementation guidelines at school level.
- An administrative structure at national, regional, and district level within DepEd that supports schools to implement the WinS programme.
- A School Based Management system (SBM) that allows schools to take leadership in implementing programs and projects for sustainability.
- Champions from DepED and partners, with different fields of expertise that have framed the need, designed and implemented feasible, scalable and sustainable solutions.
- An effective Information System that provides timely and quality data to make informed decisions when allocating resources and implementing the WinS programme.

**Figure 1. Timeline of events relevant to the WASH in Schools programme evolution in the Philippines**



Source: DepED, UNICEF and GIZ

The DepED together with UNICEF, *Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ), the International Medical Corps (IMC), Save the Children and other organizations, have been involved in implementing all of these elements in their WinS interventions to improve the quality of education of the Filipino public primary schools, as explained in the following pages.

### Introduction of comprehensive health programmes in schools

In 2007, GIZ developed and started implementing a comprehensive health programme in schools in Northern Mindanao, which included daily group handwashing with soap, daily group toothbrushing with fluoride and bi-annual deworming treatment. In 2009, the DepED, adopted the GIZ programme and institutionalized it as the Essential Health Care Programme (EHCP). UNICEF and GIZ supported the program's scale up with the provision of hygiene kits (including a toothbrush, soap and deworming treatment pills) to school children, handwashing stations to schools and targeted training to teachers and school personnel.

**Figure 2: Primary school students practicing group handwashing. Iloilo City, Region VI.**



The EHCP provided a model for an effective hygiene promotion programme that was easily scalable to increase sustainable access to sanitation and water. Moreover, the EHCP enabled schools to exercise local action to address their needs, which is the foundation of the School-Based Management (SBM) Approach. Schools demonstrated that they could work to ensure functional WASH facilities are in place and organized activities are conducted regularly. Following SBM's guidelines to mobilize local government units (LGUs), schools could get support to improve and institutionalize the EHCP programme at community level.

In 2013, sanitation, food safety and menstrual hygiene management (MHM) were included in the EHCP, broadening DepED's WinS agenda into new areas.

#### BOX 1.

### SCHOOL BASED MANAGEMENT (SBM)

*Originated in the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, this approach aims to devolve the governance of education to schools, empowering school teams and personnel, expanding community participation and involvement, making the delivery of education services to the learners more responsive, efficient, and effective through an enhanced school planning and communication process.*

### Extension of WASH in school's services to community, divisional and regional levels

The Bohol Earthquake (Oct 2013) and Typhoon Haiyan (Nov 2013) recovery programs in regions VI and VIII, called for urgency to improve WinS at a large scale that DepED had never faced before. The emergency response provided an opportunity, albeit in a very unfortunate manner, to implement WinS at community, division and regional levels, with the involvement of different DepED's units in the different programme

components. With partner funding and technical support and governments own funding, DepED led the rehabilitation and implementation of a whole range of WASH services and practices in schools.

But Typhoon Haiyan had damaged more than 3,100 schools, the majority in regions VI and VIII. The amount of destruction and the need for a swift response, compounded by inadequate resources to rebuild the water, sanitation and hygiene related infrastructures at standard levels, required a phased approach. In these regions, DepED's regional offices and school divisions led the piloting of the Three Star Approach (TSA) for WASH in School that had just been launched by GIZ and UNICEF. With their support and the direct involvement of key practitioners, the TSA was adapted as the phased pathway for post-emergency recovery and was implemented in the two regions.

The SBM applied for rehabilitation of WASH infrastructure required the participation of different units and processes, including finance, school governance, physical facilities management, school health promotion, monitoring and evaluation, training and development, and curriculum implementation. It was the first time that the SBM approach was used at scale and involving various units to address WinS. The combination of the phased and school adjusted TSA with the SBM resulted in outstanding outcomes detailed in the next pages.

### WinS Technical Working Group is established

In 2011, the DepEd and key partners created the National WASH in Schools Technical Working Group (TWG). Led by one of DepED's Undersecretary, the TWG comprised of DepED's WinS technical officials, partners from the academia, non-governmental organizations' representatives and the private sector, and worked as a multi-agency support group to DepED. It has served as a platform for constructive engagement with DepED and has created a common understanding and shared goals on WinS but also the varying positions of DepED and its different partners regarding WinS.

From its inception, the National WinS TWG has been very inclusive but due to its size, it has been difficult to manage it. Therefore, it was agreed that a Core TWG including the key WinS related government and non-government representatives would be created to take a more active and executive role. The Core WinS TWG is made up of representatives of DepED's Bureau of Learning Support Services (BLSS), GIZ, Save the Children and UNICEF. One of the key activities of the Core National WinS TWG has been supporting DepED in developing and drafting policies and guidelines on WinS.

Moreover, a fundamental aspect of the WinS TWG has been its replication at local levels.

**Figure 3: National guidelines and Wins Programme evolution**



DepED's Regional and Division WinS TWG's are responsible for all the monitoring, evaluation and support to schools as described above.

### The Three Star Approach adapted to improve WASH access in schools

The WinS TSA was piloted after Typhoon Haiyan and has since been institutionalized into WinS programming from 2016. The SBM principles and guidelines for schools were disseminated to stakeholders to take local action towards improving and sustaining WASH services in schools.

The WinS programme is based on a comprehensive package of doable practices, measures, and interventions for schools to improve access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services, using the TSA phased approach, towards the achievement of national standards for WinS as below:

- Availability of safe drinking water in school on a daily basis
- Adequate, clean, functional, and accessible school toilets
- Supervised daily group handwashing with soap and toothbrushing with fluoride toothpaste among all schoolchildren
- Environmental sanitation in schools
- Deworming of schoolchildren
- Safe practices in food handling and preparation
- Effective menstrual hygiene management in all schools
- Health education for all students and personnel, augmented by capacity building for all DepEd programme implementers

Each school sets clear and quantifiable goals within a timeframe for each of the elements above. DepED's divisional and regional offices actively engage in training school management and teachers on WinS-TSA principles and support them with the planning and budgeting of activities

and with the monitoring and evaluation of activities and outputs.

### The Champions push for WinS

Experienced and diverse WinS practitioners working for the government and for large Non-Governmental Organizations such as GIZ and Save the Children, and UNICEF have been members of the TWG. Many of them had been working in developing and implementing WinS related work in the field, so they have had the knowledge, experience, reputation and respect to guide the creation, development and implementation of a successful national WinS programme. They have been key to policy development, strengthening of information systems and WinS scale up within divisions, regions and nationally, with their involvement and leadership in learning exchanges at all levels.

### KEY POINTS THE WinS TSA STRENGTHENS THE CAPACITY OF SCHOOLS TO:

- *Identify their own needs*
- *Effectively and gradually introduce incremental solutions*
- *Manage and sustain WinS*
- *Enhance stakeholder involvement including communities*
- *Mobilize local resources*

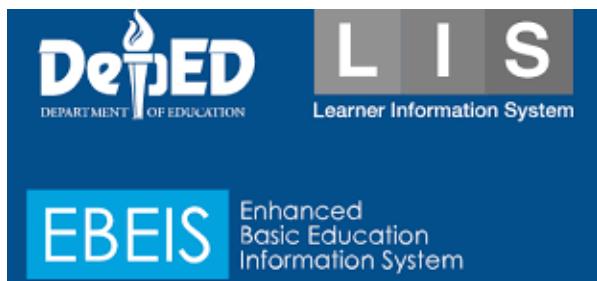
### An information system set up to provide quality data on wins programme implementation

Alongside the development of the WinS programme and the implementation of the TSA in regions VI and VIII, a specific WinS information system was developed and piloted by GIZ and UNICEF respectively, to capture key data and indicators on WinS. With the scale up of the WinS TSA, this system, known as Online Monitoring System (OMS), became the DepED's WinS-TSA information system.

OMS allows schools to capture all information relating the WinS programme and provides all indicators and relevant information the school needs to manage the programme effectively. It also provides DepEd with all relevant information, both regional and national, to report all WinS related SDG indicators.

OMS also generates key planning reports which enable schools to programme incremental improvements on WinS over a period of time and to better make use of DepED's Management, Operations and Other Expenses fund (MOOE) and other available resources.

**Figure 4: A snapshot of the OMS**



The OMS system has an interface with the Enhanced Basic Education Information System (EBEIS), which is DepEd's national education information system- thus facilitating harmonization of data.

The School Improvement Plan (SIP), based on needs generated from the OMS report, serves as a tool to set priorities for WinS and harness the participation of the school stakeholders including parents, local businesses, the community and particularly the local government units (LGUs), in effective and strategic local actions to improve the school WASH conditions.

## Outcomes

### The WinS TWG: from setting DepED's - led WinS agenda to becoming DepED's technical support arm

The role of the TWG evolved from setting DepED's WinS agenda to technically supporting DepED in addressing the sector's critical

bottlenecks. The direct involvement of highly experienced professionals has resulted in major outcomes that have helped consolidate the WinS program, namely:

- Increasing DepED's MOOE funding for WASH facilities, specifically for toilets
- Setting the National Standards for WASH services in Schools
- Making WinS affordable and responsive to differing marginalized contexts and groups through the Three Star Approach
- Expanding WinS beyond the basic Health Care Programme (Handwashing toothbrushing and deworming) to integrate toilet use, water supply and menstrual hygiene management
- Setting the National WinS policy
- Strengthening behavior change development in and through schools
- Mobilizing national and local government systems and resources for WASH in Schools

As a result of this progress, especially the integration of WinS and the health care programme and the adoption of the Three Star Approach (see more details below), the WinS programme has been scaled up at national level through multi-sectoral programming.

The active role of the region and division variant of the TWG as SBM-WinS advisor to schools has proven to be very effective in getting schools to improve and sustain WASH access to pupils.

### Integration of WinS and EHCP led to DepED reorganization

In 2015, as part of a broader process of government rationalization, DepEd created the Bureau of Learner Support Services (BLSS), that included school health and the EHCP as part of its responsibilities. Integrating school health under the BLSS umbrella has given WinS a prominent role in DepED's health-related support services. Specifically, the cross-cutting nature of Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) in schools has affirmed the importance of a multi-sectoral

approach to health in schools, including WASH services- which have been consolidated at DepED. As a result, BLSS is now directly involved in adjusting the school's curriculum so that WinS is included in many learning activities. The classic School Health Programme oriented towards prophylaxis and treatment has turned into another multidisciplinary subject where knowledge, behavior and practice are key components of learning.

### Three Star Approach: from emergency response to national standards

The post-Haiyan recovery programme during which the TSA was adapted, transformed WinS programming nationwide. The approach is the cornerstone of WinS programming at national level and is linked to the SBM model practiced by all schools. This way, schools can incrementally reach the national standards for WASH services in schools. In regions VI and VIII, the WinS programme has enabled the SBM approach to be put into practice in schools and has been so important that it led to the merger of the two acronyms into one- SBM-WinS.

### OMS improves planning and reporting WinS

WinS-OMS application is not only used to collect key data on each school's WinS status (which

included 42 different parameters), but also allows schools to make user-friendly reports, making it easier to prepare School Improvement Plans and presenting comprehensive information to community stakeholders, Division and Regional DepED and technical assistance staff. OMS use is not mandatory yet but, since it is a very useful tool for planning and budgeting is becoming very popular among schools.

In just two years, more than 70% of Filipino Public Elementary Schools were actively engaged with reporting on the TSA-WinS through the WinS-OMS. Being that only a third of elementary schools have access to WASH basic services, OMS is already providing data to help schools that do not have the basic WASH in place to ensure that these services are availed.

**BOX 2.**

## **THE NAVAIS-BORRES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: AN EXAMPLE OF WINS - LANDSCAPE RADICAL CHANGE**

*The Navais-Borres Elementary School, located in the poorly developed area of Mandurria, Iloilo City (region VI) in the Philippines, had never had access to water. Toilets had been built but never worked. In 2016, a new Principal was appointed and started implementing the TSA using SBM and planning tools such as the SIP with the support and guidance from DepED's division and regional Technical Working Groups. Since then, the school has had a remarkable improvement in the student completion rates, and in the student grades (see table below)*

(C=pass; B=good; A=Excellent)

<b>Year/grade</b>	<b>Fail</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>2016-17</b>	<b>0,0%</b>	<b>27,5%</b>	<b>40,2%</b>	<b>32,3%</b>
<b>2017-18</b>	<b>0,6%</b>	<b>16,2%</b>	<b>43,4%</b>	<b>39,8%</b>
<b>2018-19</b>	<b>0,0%</b>	<b>9,7%</b>	<b>47,8%</b>	<b>42,5%</b>



*The school staff managed to mobilize resources and get access to water for the school: a water harvesting system was installed in the school premises, using the school's roofs as catchment surfaces, which ensures access to water for sanitation for most of the school year; a drinking water supply, previously not available in the school's premises is now provided, and is assured by committed school benefactors from the community.*

*Two new low-cost group handwashing stations were built using some recycled materials from an old school building and some local materials (see picture).*



*Navais-Borres Elementary School girls and boys don't have to bring drinking water from home and go outside the school for their basic needs as they used to, since they now have access to functioning water, sanitation and hygiene infrastructures and are able to practice good WASH behaviours.*

*As a result of this sustained effort to improve the WinS conditions, the Navais-Borres Elementary School has reached the Two Star level (March 2018). The school's students and teachers are proud, as well as its community and benefactors. They are committed to continue their quest for WinS excellence and reach the 3-star level soon.*

*Ms. Matilde Encio-Farinias, Navais-Borres School principal with the School's WASH coordinator and students from the WASH club.*

## Lessons Learned

- **Disruptive situations can be turned into opportunities for change:** The post Bohol earthquake and post Typhoon Haiyan emergency responses provided the unique opportunity to implement the WinS-TSA programme at scale and adjust where necessary. The WinS needs were enormous, but the required funds were also available. Due to the demands caused by the disaster, it was inevitable to employ workable approaches to provide WASH services to schools to continue with learning in healthy environments and the TSA was one of those approaches. The current national WinS-OMS which was developed at that moment to guide and monitor the recovery of WinS in schools which had been hit by the 2013 disaster also became a useful tool.
- **Champions are priceless in strengthening and sustaining:** Professionals with a high reputation in the sector, having driven successful WinS programs while working in the field and for their expert knowledge of the local context, became leaders within DepED. The emerging leadership recognized the strategic value of WASH services in schools. UNICEF's advocacy and technical assistance on WinS combined with the new leadership, stimulated the demand for information and tools to enable more effective WinS programming in schools. The creation of the TWG, which included key WinS champions, resulted in the strengthening of the enabling environment -particularly leadership, strategy, coordination, regulation, information management, local capacity and accountability.
- **Peer exchanges are crucial and field experiences vital:** Getting the people who participated in the development and implementation of the WinS programme at the field level to directly engage with DepED at the national level and with peers from other regions, had a direct bearing on the growth of the programme nationally. This inclusive and participatory approach brought in experience sharing and idea generation ensured that critical aspects were considered when formulating the WinS policy and implementing it at national level.
- **Building up on previous steps and on what was already existing provided a stepping stone:** The present WinS-TSA applied in most of the schools is the result of integrating new activities into already existing ones, easing its implementation and strengthening school programmes. The evolution of EHCP, the addition of other WASH elements into it and the establishment of the MHM component are good examples of this phenomenon.
- **MHM is a game changer:** MHM brought the Sexual and Reproductive Health and its important education and prevention components to WinS, broadening the scope of the programme. This pushed further the fundamental shift from the medical treatment /intervention approach of the former Health and Nutrition Division programme to the prevention focused service of the new Bureau of Learning Support Services.
- **Synergies between the WinS programme and the SBM approach:** SBM was not widely practiced in schools until the WinS-TSA was developed and implemented as a key post Haiyan recovery tool. WinS-TSA required to put in practice all the elements of SBM principles on school leadership, direct involvement of internal and external stakeholders, resource management, school improvement process and performance accountability.

### KEY POINT

#### A SYMBIOTIC COMBINATION

*The weaving of WinS TSA in SBM promotes ownership at school and community level, transparency, and accountability in ensuring healthy learning environments leading to the achievement of educational objectives.*

## Next Steps

- **Information systems upgrade:** A better synchronization of OMS and EBEIS data will be done to update information in a timelier manner.

Software will also be changed for an efficient system that can be used to provide quality data to end users (School Principals and Regional and DepED officials) resulting in better decision making.

- **WinS-TSA to be adapted to the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (BARMM):** The provinces in the BARMM are the most marginalized in terms of access to WASH services, but due to its autonomous condition, WinS-TSA has not been implemented there yet. The new leadership and structure of the BARMM government is an opportunity for the WinS -TSA to be adapted to the context of BARMM schools, while ensuring that WinS needs and solutions are measured against the national standards (upon which national resource allocation is based) and being guided through a merit system, rather than an accreditation system, for improving the conditions and life-chances of children in the region.
- **Develop knowledge products to guide sub-national implementation:** The WinS TWG partners – UNICEF, GIZ and Save the Children – are supporting the development, production and distribution of useful materials (e.g. programme management manuals, technical booklets, instructional videos) to ensure the quality of WinS implementation down to the school level. This includes piloting/monitoring/evaluating the outputs and outcomes of these materials.
- **Integrate or link with other national WASH systems:** The Department of Health and the Department of Interior and Local Government are developing WASH related programs to help households and municipalities to improve their access to water and sanitation. UNICEF is already working with them to ensure that schools can also benefit from these initiatives and to provide information about WinS that can be used to better implement them holistically.

- **Revision of the Education Facilities Manual:** The on-going revision of the Education Facilities Manual is a strategic opportunity to push alternative approaches to WASH infrastructure development. The TWG has provided inputs to the overall structure and content of the manual and to the WinS provisions that need to align with the National WinS Policy and the Three Star System.

- **Policy review:** The National WinS Policy and its implementing mechanisms was set for review. UNICEF together with the TWG will provide all its expertise and support for this purpose.

**Figure 5: Pupils practicing hygiene behaviors**



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## Acknowledgements

Very valuable inputs were given by key actors, both at the Government and at key organizations in the area of WASH in the Philippines: (by chronological order of each interview)

Jonathan Valdez, WASH Advisor, Save the Children, Philippines;

Dr. Ann Quizon, Assistant Chief, School Health Division, Dep Ed;

Director Maria Gemma Ledesma, Regional Director, DepEd Region VI;

Mr. Mateo Bimba, WASH in Schools Focal Point of DepEd Region VI;

Ms. Maria Clarissa Zamora, Schools Division Superintendent, Division of Iloilo City and her team at the Iloilo DepEd's Division Office;

Ms. Matilde Encio-Farinas, Principal, and teachers at Navais-Borres Elementary School;

Principal, WinS coordinator and teachers at Bitoon Elementary School;

Mr. Abram Abanil, Director, Information and Communication Technology Service, DepED;

Dr. Ella Naliponguit, Director III, Bureau of Learner Support Services, DepEd;

Dr. Bella Monse, GIZ WinS Regional M&E;

Ms. Nicole Siegmund and Dr. Laine Velasco, GIZ Fit for School programme coordinators in the Philippines;

And special thanks to:

School teachers, WASH Club members and Community members at Navais-Borres Elementary School and Bitoon Elementary School in Iloilo for showing first-hand how the WASH programme is implemented at school level.

Mr. Ronnie Santos, WASH consultant at UNICEF the Philippines for facilitating the interviews with the key informants.

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UNICEF's water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) country teams work inclusively with governments, civil society partners and donors, to improve WASH services for children and adolescents, and the families and caregivers who support them. UNICEF works in over 100 countries worldwide to improve water and sanitation services, as well as basic hygiene practices. This publication is part of the UNICEF WASH Learning Series, designed to contribute to knowledge of good practice across UNICEF's WASH programming. In this series:

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*WASH Diaries* explore the personal dimensions of users of WASH services, and remind us why a good standard of water, sanitation and hygiene is important for all to enjoy. Through personal reflections, this series also offers an opportunity for tapping into the rich reservoir of tacit knowledge of UNICEF's WASH staff in bringing results for children.

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