



## ALLOCATE AT LEAST 15% OF THE SCHOOL FEES SUBSIDIES FOR THE PROVISION AND MAINTENANCE WASH FACILITIES SCHOOLS

Every child has the right to a quality education and a conducive environment that enables them to fully learn and thrive, which includes access to drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services while at school. Children spend a significant portion of their day at school where WASH services can impact their learning, health, and dignity, particularly for girls.<sup>1</sup> WASH in school was included in the Sustainable Development Goals (targets 4.a, 6.1, 6.2) which clearly shows its importance and increasing recognition as part of human development.

The provision of WASH in schools in Sierra Leone is insufficient and does not meet national policies that mandate provision of quantities of water for drinking and sanitation and necessary facilities for proper sanitation and hygiene. Findings first revealed by the Audit Service Sierra Leone through their Performance Audit Report on School Facilities Management 2018<sup>2</sup>. The report finds out that among other things the following:

- **Schools without water supply facilities:** 17% of the sampled schools (representing 6 out of the 35 schools visited) did not have water supply facilities. This scenario could expose 13,394 pupils to diseases related to poor sanitation and hygiene.
- **Schools with limited water supply facilities:** Only 34.4% of the sampled schools (10 schools out of 29) had wells. These wells dry up during the dry season, and a scenario of this nature meant insufficient water supply throughout the year and this may have posed risks to the health of teachers and children alike.
- **Insufficient drop holes in schools:** We noted that none of the 35 sampled schools visited had the required ratio of drop holes per either boys or girls. While the standard required is one drop hole per 45 pupils, the average ratio for the 35 sampled schools visited in the provinces was 1 drop hole per 144 pupils. The Western Area Urban District had the worst drop hole per pupil ratio of 248 pupils per drop hole
- **The toilets were hardly clean** and in addition to this, no hand washing facilities were found in most of the schools visited. In fact, only four schools had such hand washing facilities but even in this case, the children didn't have soap for hand washing. This may have highly exposed the pupils to diseases related to poor hygiene and sanitation.

<sup>1</sup> <https://data.unicef.org/topic/water-and-sanitation/wash-in-schools/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.auditservice.gov.sl/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Performance-Audit-Report-on-School-Facilities-Management-2018.pdf>

These findings are confirmed by a recent nationwide education census done by the DSTI<sup>3</sup> and Ministry of Education. The survey among others find out the following related to WASH:

- **21% (2,218)** of schools in Sierra Leone do not have WASH facilities hence exposing approximately **416,319** pupils to disease related to poor sanitation and hygiene
- Of the **79% (8,529)** of schools that have toilet facilities, **29%** of their toilet is not in good condition further exposing approximately **454,189** pupils to disease course by poor WASH facilities
- **29% (3,162)** of schools do not have drinking water leaving approximately **574,917** pupils without drinking water
- Of those that have drinking water, **18%** of the schools do not have protected drinking water hence exposing approximately **292,613** to disease related to lack of clean drinking water.

Because every child deserves WASH in Schools, we are calling for renewed commitments to:

- **Set minimum standards for WASH in Schools.** Formulate and implement national, regional and local standards for WASH in Schools, based on UNICEF-World Health Organization guidelines. The minimum standards for WASH in Schools should be specific to each district's context. These standards should be the basis for national action plans and budgeting for education and WASH. that aim to reach all schools within a concrete time frame and should allow for gradual improvements to facilities and hygiene practices.
- **Robust Monitoring of WASH in Schools coverage using Education Management Information Systems (EMIS).** Raise the profile for inclusion of WASH in Schools indicators in EMIS. Analyse data annually and use the findings for informed decision making and better resource allocation. Support the compilation of data on coverage and practices diverse levels to attract attention and funding to WASH in Schools.
- **Integrate WASH Into Education.** Ensure WASH becomes a stand alone intervention focus on the use of school fees subsidies. Emphasizing on the need for conducive and enable spaces for learning Make the School Sanitation and Hygiene Education Programme and particularly, separate sanitation facilities for boys and girls; **ensuring that at least 15% of the school fees subsidies be committed to addressing the WASH needs across schools.**

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<sup>3</sup> <https://educationdatahub.dsti.gov.sl/>