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# Implementation of the Fit for School Approach in Guinea

## Improving WASH in Schools for better education and child development

### The challenge

The low level of education amongst the Guinean population hinders the country's development. Poor learning environments and high absenteeism result in poor education outcomes. Students suffering from diseases are more frequently absent from school, sleep less, and show an overall lower learning outcome compared than their healthy peers. Neglected water, sanitation and hygiene conditions in school further exacerbate highly preventable diseases.

The ebola epidemic which hit Guinea in 2014 devastated the country for nearly two years and had lasting impacts on economic activity and social services. The tragedy also underscored the tremendous importance of water, sanitation and hygiene conditions in low-income settings to prevent the spread of disease.

### Our approach

Promoting healthy habits in conducive learning environments allows children to make the most of their education through better health. This is also reflected in the SDG 4 on Quality Education, which, under 4.a.1, includes an indicator on schools with access to basic drinking water; usable single-sex basic sanitation facilities; and basic handwashing facilities with available water and soap.



The Fit for School Approach strengthens school-based management to support the implementation of water, sanitation and hygiene programmes, including daily handwashing, regular cleaning of school toilets and regular deworming, to address high-impact diseases. Combined with improved access to clean water, washing facilities and appropriate sanitation, key determinants of health are addressed in a single intervention package.

### Fit for School in Guinea

On behalf of BMZ, GIZ has fostered the Fit for School Approach in the Philippines since 2008 and more broadly in Southeast Asia since 2011, through GIZ's Regional Fit for School programme.

Guinea was selected as the first country in francophone Africa to adapt the Fit for School approach. Having emerged from the devastation of the ebola crisis, there is strong resolve to create healthy, clean environments and to promote proper hygiene behavior in the country.

On behalf of BMZ, GIZ's Promotion of Basic Education Programme provides technical assistance to the Guinean Ministry of National Education and Literacy (*Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et de l'Alphabétisation*). The Fit for School Approach has been integrated as a component of the basic education programme.

Project name	Promotion of Basic Education
Commissioned by	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project country	Guinea
Lead executing agency	Guinean Ministry of National Education and Literacy (MEN-A)
Duration	January 2015 – December 2019

## Implementation in Guinea

In 2017, officials of MEN-A visited the Philippines to learn about Fit for School implementation in the country and exchange experiences on WinS with the Philippine Department of Education.

After considering the WASH challenges in Guinean schools and the feasibility of intervention options, MEN-A, together with GIZ, decided to focus their Fit for School efforts on a package of three key interventions:

- **daily group handwashing with soap,**
- **regular cleaning of school toilets, and**
- **annual deworming within the National Programme.**

The Guinean FIT approach is being piloted in 50 schools spread across 5 regions of the country, namely Kindia, Labé, Mamou, Faranah and N'Zérékoré. Representatives at all levels of the ministry (national, regional, district, sub-district, and school) have been oriented on the FIT approach.

With technical assistance from GIZ and learnings from the Philippines, MEN-A has established a national-level Technical Working Group (TWG) for WinS. With support from development partners, the TWG is responsible for the drafting and endorsement of a WinS policy for Guinea.



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## Success factors

### Simple, scalable, sustainable and system-focused

The Fit for School Approach is based on four core principles: simplicity, sustainability, scalability and system focus. A WASH in Schools programme and its interventions must be based on the best possible evidence and should be cost-effective and simplified to facilitate implementation in the school context with little extra effort. To ensure sustainability, long-term allocation of government human and financial resources is crucial. Close partnership with the parents and the local community is imperative in maximising ownership, transparency and accountability.

Capitalising on existing systems and resources is an essential strategy for scalability and sustainability. The approach works through the education sector, especially at the subnational level, to promote sustainable programme management and implementation within the local structures. Additional payments and monetary incentives are not part of the approach since they often lead to a collapse of activities as soon as the external funding ends.

### School-based management

Recognising the importance of School-Based Management, the Fit for School Approach strengthens the capacity of the education sector to implement and monitor WinS and open the doors of schools for close collaboration with parents and the larger school community. Every member of the community can contribute in various important ways to make the programme successful, including the construction of washing facilities, participation in monitoring, cleaning, repair, and maintenance. In this way, even schools with very limited resources can start to improve the school environment step-by-step and implement simple but effective WinS interventions.

In cooperation with



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