

FIT FOR SCHOOL

REGIONAL FIT FOR SCHOOL PROGRAMME FOR WASH IN SCHOOLS

Improving Health for Better Education and Child Development

The FIT for School programme is simple and sustainable, transforming schools into healthy learning environments where routine hygiene practices turn into long-term habits. To date, the programme has reached 81,000 primary school students from 250 schools.

To reduce hygiene deficiency related diseases in school-age children in Cambodia, the programme focuses on improving basic hygiene, including dental hygiene and preventing worm infections.

The programme promotes the use of simple techniques such as daily supervised group handwashing with soap, daily supervised group tooth brushing with fluoride toothpaste and bi-annual deworming. The programme goes beyond traditional curriculum-based health education, supporting children in acquiring healthy habits and promoting sustainable behavior change through a skills-based approach and daily routines. Promoting healthy habits in supportive learning environments allows children to lead healthier lives and get the most out of their education.

Fit for School-A National Flagship Programme

The German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) commissioned GIZ to implement the Regional Fit for School programme. Launched in 2011, the programme supported the adaptation of the Fit for School Approach in the four countries Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR and the Philippines.

Project name	Fit for School
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Cambodia, the Philippines, Lao PDR and Indonesia
Lead executing agency	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS)

In Cambodia, it is a joint Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Schools (WinS) programme of the Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS), the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology (SEAMEO INNOTECH) and GIZ. GIZ supports MoEYS to implement and scale-up the Fit for School approach nation-wide.

Strategic partnerships with MoEYS and various organizations including UNICEF and World Vision have helped this programme expand, reaching school-children throughout the country. MoEYS and GIZ are currently working closely with the provincial and district offices of education in Kampot province to scale-up the approach in all of its primary schools.

WASHaLOT – Washing Hands and Engaging Communities

Recognising school-based management as an important cornerstone, the Fit for School approach strengthens the capacity of the education sector to manage WASH in schools. As a result, the programme opens school doors to the community and parents.



Photo left: Global Hand Washing day at Ang Phnom Thoch primary school in Angkor Chey district in Kampot province

Photo right: Students brush their teeth at Trav Kos primary school in Kroung Kampot at Kampot province



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Students are taking deworming tablets

School principal, community and district officials are monitoring the Fit for School implementation together

Every member of the community can contribute in various ways to make the programme successful including the construction of washing facilities, participation in monitoring and cleaning, repair and maintenance. Even schools with very limited resources can start to improve their hygiene step-by-step.

The handwashing facility, WASHaLOT, designed by the Fit for School program and produced by the Don Bosco Technical School in Phnom Penh at an affordable cost for school communities has been ordered by a variety of organisations and is currently being used in over 250 schools. This means that over 81,000 students can now wash their hands as part of their daily school routine.



The handwashing facility WASHaLOT

Proven Impacts

A study on programme impact in collaboration with University College London (UCL) was conducted in Cambodia in ten model schools implementing the Fit for School programme and ten control schools. Data was collected by trained personnel from the MoEYS and Ministry of Health, while analysis has been conducted by the National Center for Parasitology, Entomology and Malaria Control.

The study shows that FIT model schools have better access to handwashing facilities, water and soap due to the construction of multiple handwashing facilities. In FIT model schools, the ratio of students to water slot was 4:1, while in control schools, it amounted to 55:1. Encouraged by the programme implementation, model schools even went beyond intended programme activities by also building handwashing facilities for individual use.

Although the understanding of handwashing is the same, reported peer practice and actual handwashing observation was higher in FIT model schools than in other schools. Children in FIT model schools more often practiced independent handwashing with soap after using the latrine compared to children in other schools.

Only 1 percent of children are reported to have heavy worm infections reflecting the regularity and effectiveness of deworming treatment at FIT model schools.

Children in FIT model schools developed less dental caries compared to other schools. Daily group tooth brushing with fluoride toothpaste in schools prevented 17 percent of new caries lesions.

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