

# Cambodia // Fit for School

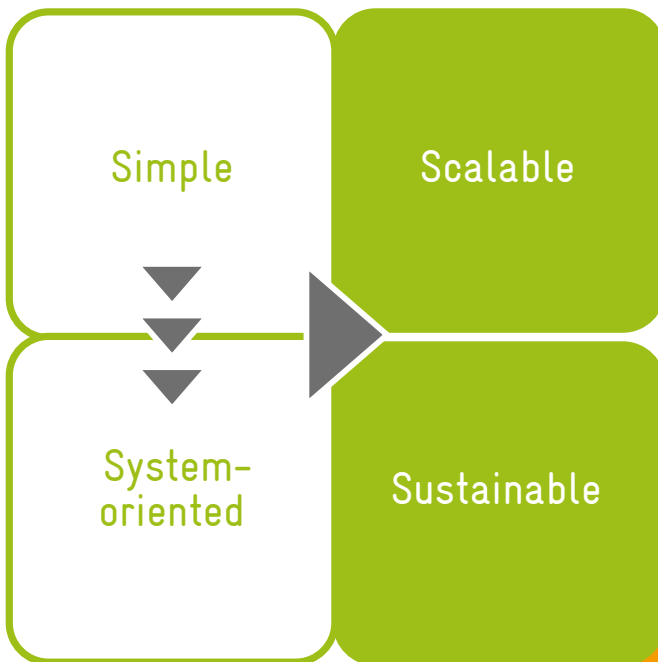
## Key Successful Factors and Impact 2011–2022



Fit for School is a regional program covering for Asian Countries: Philippines, Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Indonesia.

The Fit for School approach is designed around the four key principles of simplicity, scalability, sustainability and system-oriented. They guide implementation and management models, interventions to establish a supportive environment, as well as all other facilitating program elements on national, sub-national and school level.

Key routine interventions of the Fit for School program are handwashing, toothbrushing and deworming, the operation and maintenance of WASH facilities, and the monitoring of basic WASH services in schools.



The Four Key Principles

# INTRODUCTION

By supporting ministries of education in their implementation of national WASH in Schools (WinS) programs, more than 14.9 million children have been reached by the Fit for School program. The program originated in the Philippines and has been implemented on a national scale by the Philippine Department of Education (DepEd). The program gained momentum and expanded regionally throughout Cambodia, Indonesia and Lao PDR in 2012 with 10, 12 and 22 public primary schools, respectively. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) started implementing the program in ten public primary model schools in different geographical locations, including the capital city of Phnom Penh, as well as in the provinces of Kampot, Takeo, Kampong Thom, and Kampong Cham in two schools per province.

11 years of Fit for School Program (2011–2022) in Cambodia has been quite successful and significantly contributed to improving WinS and prevented thousands of school children from being afflicted by hygiene-related diseases, soil-transmitted helminth infections, and dental caries.

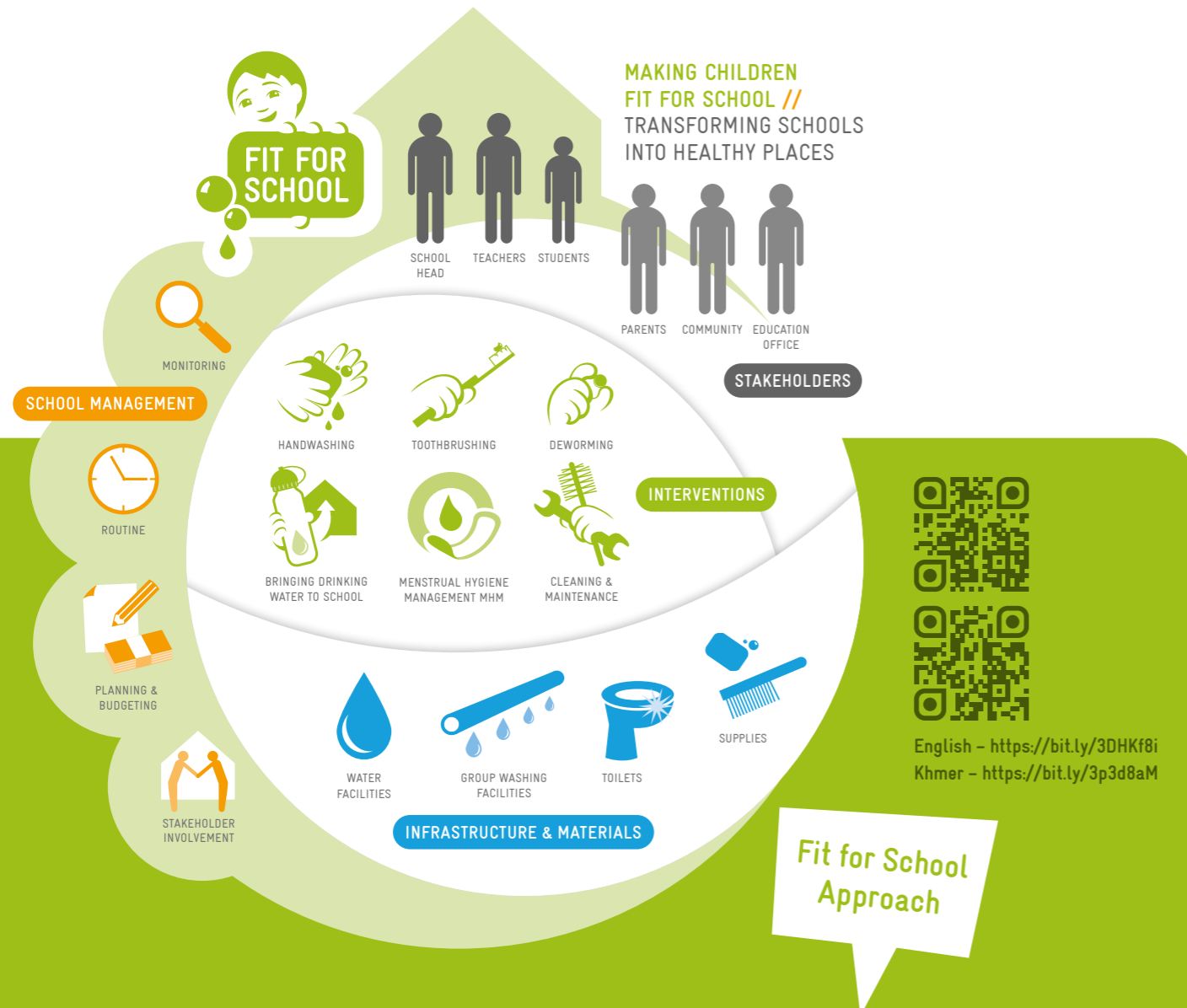
For instance, in the first 2 years of implementation, children in the program model schools had 17% lower caries progression in the permanent teeth than children in non-model schools.

Although the third phase of Fit for School Program ended in December 2022, it leaves many significant results that brings to light key success factors for Government Counterparts, Development Partners and other stakeholders working on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Schools (WinS). This paper will reflect on the four key principles and the key success factors of the Fit for School program in Cambodia over the past 11 years.

# FIT FOR SCHOOL JOURNEY // CAMBODIA



**2022:**  
 THROUGH THE PROGRAM'S SUPPORT TO THE MOEYS, **1.18M** SCHOOL CHILDREN (35.3%) ARE VISITING SCHOOLS THAT COMPLY WITH ALL THREE SDG TARGETS:  
 THESE SCHOOLS PROVIDE ACCESS TO DRINKING WATER, ACCESS TO GENDER SEGREGATED, USABLE TOILETS AND ACCESS TO HANDWASHING STATIONS WITH WATER AND SOAP.



# THE FOUR KEY PRINCIPLES

## 1. PRINCIPLE Simplicity

### SIMPLE ACTIVITIES TURN INTO HEALTHY HABITS.

The Regional Fit for School program promotes simple yet essential activities that turn schools into healthy learning environments where the routine practice of basic hygiene are nurtured into long-term habits. The activities include daily group handwashing with soap, daily group tooth brushing with fluoride toothpaste, bi-annual deworming, and a clean-as-you-go approach to the operation and maintenance of WASH facilities.

#### TIPS // KEEP THE PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION SIMPLE:

- › Starting small and choose affordable and evidence-based interventions that can easily be implemented.
- › Focusing on simplicity on school level, and also supporting systems that integrate management processes such as monitoring which can also serve as capacity building and performance management in its regular practice.
- › Developing practical learning models and self-explanatory materials (e.g., FIT basic orientation video, Minimum Requirement Guidelines on WinS video) that guide the individuals and offices on different levels.
- › Making use of local and low-cost materials that are available long-term to ease logistics and procurement.
- › Having scale in mind from the very beginning,
- › Asking yourself: Can the program interventions easily be scaled up from model schools 100 or even 1,000 schools?



**FIT FOR SCHOOL PROGRAMME SUMMARY**  
Please have a look at a video clip summarized about the Fit for School Program in the Cambodian context which aims to make simple and cost-effective preventive measures.  
> <https://bit.ly/3caWVsP>



## 2. PRINCIPLE System-Oriented

The Fit for School Approaches targets multiple enabling aspects and systems from national and sub-national level, including I/NGOs or Development Partners.

### GOVERNMENT SYSTEM

Fit for School Program uses the existing structures of the education sector, especially on sub-national level, to establish a sustainable system for program implementation, management and monitoring within the local structures.

#### TIPS // INTEGRATE THE PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION INTO THE SYSTEM OF THE GOVERNMENT:

- › Focusing on improving systems to bring about sustainable change.
- › Integrating the program and its activities into existing structures of the education sector, such as quarterly meetings of Technical Working Group on WinS, monthly meetings between District Office of Education and school cluster heads, and so on.
- › Working towards securing funding through the regular Government budget lines.
- › Connecting with the education monitoring and accreditation/recognition systems to reach stepwise improvements and strengthen school-based management skills and accountability.
- › Involving the school community early on for support and additional contributions.



### I/NGOS AND DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS SYSTEM

The program has involved and cooperated with all I/NGOs and Development Partners working on WinS through partnerships under government coordination platforms – i.e., Technical Working Group on WinS. By understanding and acknowledging the Fit for School Program, some I/NGOs and Development Partners have applied its approaches and key interventions, including handwashing, toothbrushing and deworming, and thus acting as multipliers and co-advocates. There have so far been several NGOs that have adopted Fit for School measures into their WASH programming such as World Vision Cambodia, World Food Program, etc.



**SCHOOL COMMUNITY MANUAL // PRIMARY SCHOOLS** // To go deeper on practical steps for school heads, teachers, parents and community members on how to support and engage in activities based on the Fit for School Approach, please have a look at "Cambodia School Community Manual".  
> <https://bit.ly/3dx8fkz>



### 3. PRINCIPLE Scalability

Onwards of 2015, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) decided to focus their scale-up strategy in one province first and establish a working model for the rest of the country. Kampot Province was chosen for the scale-up. As of October 2017, Kampot Province has scaled-up the full Fit for School program activities to 70 primary schools (23 % of all 306 primary schools) in less than two years. A study on key success factors that enabled this scale-up was conducted and published in June 2018 to better understand in depth how Kampot POE/DOE was able to scale-up the Fit for School Program and its approach.

#### THE RESEARCH ON KAMPOT SCALE-UP SUCCESS FACTORS HIGHLIGHTED THE IMPACT OF FIT FOR SCHOOL PROGRAM THAT LED TO:

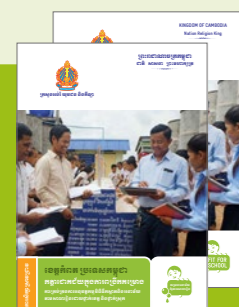
- ✓ Improved access to handwashing facilities, water and soap.
- ✓ Stimulated healthy hygiene practices, such as individual handwashing with soap at critical times.
- ✓ Supported the development of the national deworming program.
- ✓ Prevented the development of new dental caries lesions.

#### SUCCESS FACTORS IN KAMPOT PROVINCE

During the course of the study, facilitating factors that enabled Kampot Province to scale-up Fit for School were identified. Six aspects were highlighted as decisive factors to successfully manage WASH in Schools on provincial and district levels, in order to reach a large number of schools and to ensure the implementation quality of hygiene activities.

#### THE SIX KEY SUCCESSFUL FACTORS ENABLED THE SCALE UP OF THE FIT FOR SCHOOL PROGRAM IN KAMPOT PROVINCE WERE:

- ✓ Integration of WinS in existing processes of MoEYS.
- ✓ Establish indicators for success to measure scale-up against targets.
- ✓ Leadership and commitment can drive scale-up.
- ✓ Building capacities of DOEs, clusters, school director, school health committee and school support committee.
- ✓ Strong advocacy on multiple levels to support WinS.
- ✓ Active school-based management of stakeholder involvement.



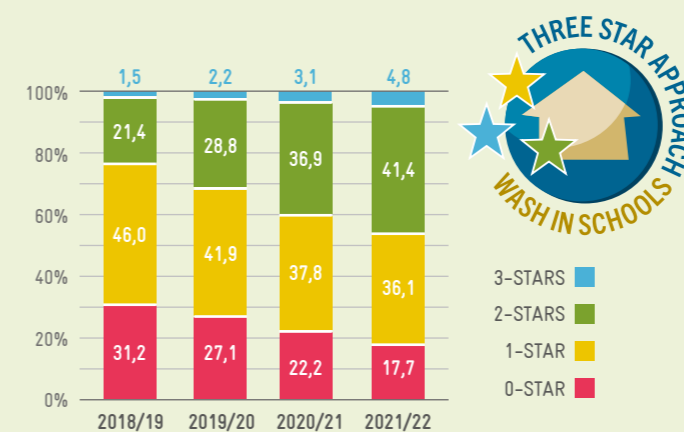
**SCALE-UP SUCCESS FACTORS**  
For more details, please have a look at research paper on "Scale-up Success Factors: Managing WASH in Schools on Provincial and District Levels".  
> <https://bit.ly/3eelzuC>



### 4. PRINCIPLE Sustainability

#### NATIONAL APPROACH // PROMOTION BY INTEGRATION INTO MINIMUM REQUIREMENT GUIDELINES ON WinS

On its 2nd and 3rd Phases, Fit for School Cambodia has focused integrating the program activities into the Minimum Requirement Guidelines (MR Guidelines) on WinS, and thereafter supporting the implementation and management thereof through the application of the Three-Star Approach. After the MR Guidelines was endorsed in 2016, the Fit for School Program supported MoEYS with capacity building, technical solutions and other interventions to promote WinS through the MR Guidelines. As a result of the program's support, and in alignment with the efforts of other Development Partners, the number of schools with star-0 have decreased over the last four years from 31.2% to 17.7% (13.5% difference), while schools with star-2 increased from 21.4% to 41.4% (20% difference). The results of the data shows that the schools in Cambodia are taking big steps towards improvement of the WASH situation in the country and provide a safer learning environment.



STAR RATINGS FOR ALL SCHOOLS OVER 4 MONITORING ROUNDS IN CAMBODIA

Annual data of minimum requirement guidelines on WASH in Schools.

#### SUB-NATIONAL APPROACH // PROMOTION THROUGH SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT

The Fit for School Program approach has brought a sustainable WASH development and behavior change in schools by focusing on school-based management (SBM), and monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

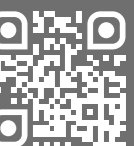
#### THE PROGRAM APPROACH HAS PROMOTED SBM WITH THREE ASPECTS:

- ✓ Stakeholder involvement including MoEYS staff at all level, school heads, teachers, students, community and parents.
- ✓ Planning and budgeting.
- ✓ Management and activity routines enforced by M&E systems.

The Fit for School Approach builds on the strength of schools as self-managing entities with the leadership and active involvement of education personnel, as well as the close collaboration with the larger school community and parents. Every member of the community can contribute in various important ways to make the program successful including the construction of washing facilities, participation in monitoring or cleaning, repairing and maintenance. In this way, even schools with limited resources can implement effective health interventions and improve their infrastructure little by little. The Fit for School Program goes beyond traditional curriculum-based health education, supporting children in acquiring healthy habits and promoting sustainable behaviour change through a skills-based approach and daily routines.

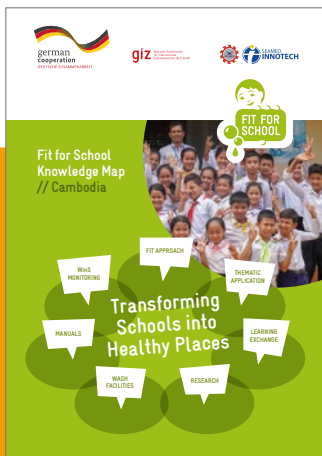


**MONITORING REPORT** // As a reference, the "Monitoring report: Findings from the three-year Minimum Requirements Surveys for WASH in Schools in Cambodia" has been published and accessed at:  
> <https://bit.ly/3Ebppkn>



# CONCLUSION

- ✔ The 4 principles including Simplicity, Scalability, Sustainability and System-Oriented have led to the success of the Fit for School Program and its recognition by the Government and its WinS partners.
- ✔ As testament to this, both Government counterpart and WinS NGOs partners have applied Fit for School approach and its key routine interventions.
- ✔ With 11 years of successes, the Fit for School program has produced several outputs and outcomes, tools, and IEC materials available online as listed in the Cambodia knowledge map.



FIT FOR SCHOOL KNOWLEDGE MAP CAMBODIA  
 > <https://bit.ly/3WjNn2Y>

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