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Partnerships
in Practice

Engaging private sector actors in WASH in School work

Research Paper

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Abstract

Thanks to decades of advocacy work, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in School (WinS) is moving up on political agendas, leading to more programmes and the involvement of a more diverse range of partners. This paper represents the first formal attempt to analyse the engagement of private sector actors in WinS multi-sector partnerships.

The study focuses on international and domestic private companies and their foundations. It examines these partners, reveals their incentives to join WinS multi-sector partnerships, uncovers trends and patterns in their contributions, and the benefits they derive from such partnerships. The paper underlines the need to diversify the contributions made by private partners to

foster more sustainable programmes. It argues for an engagement based on strategic CSR rather than philanthropic incentives. Structural obstacles constraining the development of more ambitious partnerships are identified, and pragmatic recommendations to overcome them provided.

On-going advocacy work towards governments remains critical for the development and enforcement of appropriate WinS regulatory tools, for the mobilisation of more resources and eventually for negotiating the PPP frameworks clarifying the rules of engagement for private partners. Organisations actively involved in WinS and multi-sector partnerships have an essential role to play in the creation of an enabling environment.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Engaging private sector actors in WinS partnerships

In many developing countries, water supply and sanitation facilities at schools are often lacking or poorly maintained and students largely fail to practise basic hygiene behaviours (Freeman et al. 2010). However, the past decades have seen increasingly coordinated and effective advocacy work targeting key institutions at the central level, such as the Ministry of Education (MoE) and Ministry of Health (MoH). As a result, Water Sanitation and Hygiene in Schools (WinS) has gained increasing prominence on political agendas, leading to more programmes involving a more diverse range of partners (UNICEF 2012, IRC 2007).

Although not properly measured and documented to date, the interest from private sector actors to join these initiatives appear to be growing. These actors are gaining visibility in WinS programmes and their contribution to WinS partnerships is being sought more and more systematically (UNICEF 2012). Their incentives to engage in WinS work range from philanthropic motivations to corporate social responsibility (CSR) to core business interests. Contributions are mainly in the form of financial support to the construction of WASH facilities (i.e. water supply, handwashing stations, latrines, urinals) and to the implementation of behaviour change activities (i.e. awareness raising campaign, hygiene education).

1.2. Clarifying project boundaries

The aim of the project is to analyse the nature and evolution of the engagement of private sector actors in WinS work with a view to enhancing the role of private sector. More specifically, this research was developed to examine the relevance and impact of this engagement on WinS programmes as well as on private partners themselves and on the identification of factors that would enhance the scale and sustainability of private sector engagement.

This thematic area is largely uncharted and relatively broad when considering: i) the diversity of private sector actors engaging in WinS work; ii) the various kinds of WinS partnerships and

networks; and iii) the distinct perspectives taken by the multiple stakeholder groups partnering in these initiatives. To keep the scope of this exploratory research manageable, focus was thus put on a designated category of private players, a type of partnership, and on the perspectives of a selected set of stakeholders:

This project thus concentrates on a group of private actors consisting of international and domestic private companies (e.g. food and beverage industries, soap and detergent industry, agroindustry, bank industry, personal care products providers) and their foundations. Unlike private local service providers (e.g. building contractors, pump menders, latrine emptiers) who get involved in WinS work through key construction or maintenance activities, these organisations are typically not assigned official mandates to pursue WinS work, but they occasionally contribute to programmes, for instance through the provision of financial resources, products or technical skills.

The field of investigation of this research is narrowed down to the participation of this group of private sector actors in multi-sector partnerships implementing WinS work. These partnerships typically bring together the public sector (e.g. the MoE, the MoH, the local government), NGOs (international, national, local), donor agencies (governmental, multilateral) sometimes joined by non-traditional actors (including private companies and philanthropic organisations) and academia.

The engagement of the designated private stakeholders in the above defined WinS partnerships was analysed by considering in priority the perspectives of donor organisations, iNGOs, the private sector actors themselves, as well as researchers and consultants. Limited resources prevented a direct and thorough assessment of the perspectives held by the representatives of the MoE (at national, district and local levels) and members of the school community (e.g. teachers, parents, and pupils). It was assumed that these perspectives would be conveyed, at least to some extent, in the views of researchers, consultants and NGOs.

2. Methodology

The research is based on qualitative methods of investigation. Information was collected via two channels: a literature review of the academic and grey literature, as well as a series of semi-structured interviews conducted with WinS partnership informants. These conversations were guided by the use of an analytical framework reviewed by a pool of three international WinS experts (see Annex). This framework assumes that private sector engagement in WinS programmes is desirable and should be promoted. This working hypothesis usefully narrows the scope of this project. Complementary research might usefully challenge this hypothesis and critically assess the relevance of private sector engagement in WinS programmes.

Table 1: Distribution of informants by sector and type of organisation

Sector	Type of organisation	# of informants	Share of sample
Public Sector	· Donor agencies	2	10%
	· Local	1	
Research	· Research institutions	4	20%
	· Consultants	2	
NGOs	· International	11	47%
	· Multilateral	2	
	· Local	1	
Private Sector	· Multinationals	6	23%
	· Domestic	1	

Initially, a broad list of potential informants was developed. This comprehensive list exceeding 300 entries was broken down by sector, distinguishing the public sector, research institutions, NGOs, and the private sector. Gathering insights from representatives of all sectors involved in WinS multi-sector partnerships was deemed critical to the success of this project. The first sample included 84 individuals with relevant experience. The balance of this first sample was skewed in favour of the NGO sector, reflecting the high number of NGO staff involved in WinS work. In comparison, it proved more challenging to identify relevant contacts in the private sector and in the

domestic public sector, partly due to high turnover rates.

As shown on Table 1, the final sample of informant comprises 30 informants and is fairly representative of the different types of organisations intervening on WinS work. As explained above, representatives of the government and of the school community are under-represented.

3. Results

3.1. The nature of the engagement of private sector actors in WinS work

Private organisations partnering in WinS work

A variety of private actors is engaged in WinS programmes. Amongst the group targeted by this research, a number of large multinational enterprises appear to be more present and visible. They include soap manufacturers and feminine care providers. Usually, they have a direct stake in the promotion of hygiene. According to several interviewees, they have the most established and structured involvement in WinS. In addition, domestic for-profit companies are sometimes brought within partnerships, although they tend to lack the financial means that characterise international businesses and their experience in CSR is usually very limited. Table 2 provides an overview of some of the companies and foundations most commonly cited as WinS partners by informants and in the literature.

Table 2. Frequently cited companies and foundations partnering on WinS work

· Unilever	· Merck
· P&G	· Xylem
· Johnson & Johnson	· H&M Conscious Foundation
· The Coca-Cola Company	· GlaxoSmithKline
· The Coca-Cola African Foundation (TCCAF)	· PZ-Cussons
· FEMSA Foundation	· Cargill
· Kimberley-Clark	· Nestlé

The way partnerships with private actors are initiated appears to be varied. At the national level, individual connections are sometimes the trigger for these collaborations. Domestic companies and foundations are often contacted by NGOs, but

increasingly they are actively reaching out to those NGO implementing partners themselves. Public bilateral development agencies also occasionally play a catalyst role for bringing the private sector in.

Trends

Although the data collected did not establish a clear and robust trends describing the evolution of private sector engagement in WinS work, interesting insights were formed into how this involvement is changing and under what pressures. First, several WinS experts were keen to recall that private sector engagement in WinS is not a new phenomenon. The late 1990s was identified as a turning point, where a surge of interest led to greater partnerships with the private sector in the field of school hygiene. A series of soap handwashing programmes in Latin American and African countries supported by organisations such as The World Bank, the Water and Sanitation Program (WSP), USAID, UNICEF and a pool of large companies and foundations marked an initial push for a more structured and systematic engagement of private partners. These efforts are ongoing, as illustrated by UNICEF's sustained call to the private sector and foundations to intervene in WinS under a number of possible modalities (e.g. as funding partners, advocates, or public-private-partnerships (PPP) partners) (UNICEF 2012).

In the absence of objective quantitative tracking (both spatial and historical) of private sector contributions to WinS work, insights into such changes rely on the subjective view of informants. A significant number has witnessed an increased interest from private actors to become involved in WinS programmes. Nevertheless, informants regard the contributions of this group as still largely ad hoc, small scale, and with a tendency to focus on urban or peri-urban areas. Informants from academia also indicated that in the past fifteen years, WinS work has been influenced by a paradigm shift affecting policies and practices in the whole WASH sector. Overall, the original focus on the provision of hardware (building tap-stands and toilets for pupils) has been replaced by a heightened awareness of the challenges associated with achieving sustainable water supply and sanitation services and anchoring improved hygiene behaviours.

Finally, a recent trend also noted by several informants pertains to the greater contribution of private sector actors to the menstrual hygiene management component of WinS work. This trend reflects a growing emphasis in the WASH sector on effective means to address social taboos such as gender issues, which have a major impact on girls' drop-out rates and gender inequality.

Motivations and interests

Private sector motivations and interest in engaging in WinS appear to depend largely on the specific business size and type of companies. They range from philanthropy to strategic CSR to core business. Prospects of reputational advantages (towards employees and in the marketplace) and improved public relations (notably with ministry officials and representatives from local authorities) are invariably cited as key incentives. According to the majority of informants, philanthropic motivations still underlie the participation in WinS of a significant share of companies and foundations. Yet, they (particularly the larger companies and their related foundations) are increasingly engaging on the basis of more strategic approaches. They sometimes proudly communicate the rationale for their engagement, stressing the logical connection to their core business. For foundations linked to beverage industries, for instance, WinS fits into a greater strategy aimed at promoting the well-being and socio-economic development of the community. This strategy is seen as a prerequisite for an enhanced purchasing power of its members.

Similarly, there is a growing interest amongst companies to use the WinS components of WASH programmes as business opportunities to develop corporate Bottom of the Pyramid market. A number of companies expressed their interest in gaining a better understanding of the specific market that schools represent as a point of entry into local communities. Partnering with organisations endowed with community outreach capacity and expert knowledge of the local socio-economic context is seen as a low-risk contribution to their goal. This applies to soap, toothpaste and pump manufacturers alike. At the same time, the consistently cited proposition that soap companies have clear incentives to support the hygiene behaviour change component of WinS programmes was nuanced by several informants:

they stressed that given the low penetration of their products in schools and the fact that most of soap sales are achieved at household level, such companies have actually far greater incentives to support household-centred WASH approaches.

Nature of the contribution

Although private sector actors are found to contribute to all areas of WinS programmes, they still appear to prefer to support the hardware components, typically the construction of water and sanitation facilities. Several informants expressed that local companies are often unaware of the nature and significance of the software components of programmes. Also, a significant number of multinational enterprises underlined the importance for them of documented and tangible outcomes of their engagement. This emphasis partly explains why the shift towards a greater support of software aspects (e.g. behaviour change, O&M arrangements, central and local level advocacy, research) is taking place at too slow a pace in the view of many NGO informants.

Monetary contributions are the most common. Nevertheless companies occasionally also bring their marketing, communications and public relations expertise to WinS programmes. In some cases, these companies also use their networking and advocacy skills aimed at peers and the government. To a lesser extent, companies have also engaged in awareness raising campaigns through their employees. Nevertheless, private sector actors, and notably local companies, tend to ignore what form their contribution to WinS programmes could take, other than financial.

Structural disincentives

A large proportion of informants view the level of engagement of private sector actors in WinS as still relatively low given the great potential they see for partnership expansion. Yet, very few could think of possible structural factors hindering further engagement of non-traditional WinS stakeholders. The obstacle most frequently cited consists of deeply rooted prejudices across sectors (particularly between for-profit and non-profit organisations, but also between the private and public sector). Whilst receding globally, cross-sector mistrust remains a significant hindrance in some countries and prevents effective multi-

sector-partnership work. The lack of explicit consideration of WinS in global development instruments, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), is also perceived as a structural disincentive for private sector engagement. Furthermore, as a large multinational enterprise expressed, identifying “winning partners” on the ground, dealing with heavy administrative barriers and restrictive national legislations are the common challenges private partners need to be prepared for when joining WinS interventions.

3.2. Impact of the engagement of private sector actors

How is success defined?

A vast majority of informants reports that private actors rely more on a quantitative evaluation of their contribution than on a qualitative assessment of the actual impact of their engagement. Such definitions often emphasize indicators like the number of schools and children reached by the programme. Several informants from civil society and academia stress that such an approach to defining success misses essential aspects of WinS programmes which cannot be easily reduced to numbers, and relate to good O&M of WASH facilities and hygiene behaviour change, for instance. The extents to which these changes become anchored are indeed at the core of the sustainability challenge. On this critical subject, the majority of informants agreed that private sector engagement has had at best a very limited impact to push for greater sustainability - and, that in some instances, it has even had a detrimental effect.

The situation is, nevertheless, evolving. Several surveyed companies explained how their approach to measuring success is shifting and expanding to include sustainability indicators. This seems to be especially the case for actors whose engagement in WinS closely relates to their core business, and who have a genuine stake in seeing lasting change and socio-economic impact resulting from their engagement, leading to greater buying power and new purchasing habits (e.g. for hygiene products). In contrast, actors whose engagement is principally motivated by more traditional (i.e. philanthropic) CSR interests tend, according to several interviewees, to equate success with the delivery

of visible outputs such as water and sanitation facilities. Still, there is clearly a growing awareness amongst private actors on the limitations of a purely quantitative, output-based assessment of their contribution. This awareness is manifest in the multi-sector learning platform that a large Latin American foundation recently set up with NGOs and US universities to support WinS and community WASH programming (including the development of improved monitoring and evaluation (M&E)). By helping disseminate and institutionalise best practises the foundation expects to contribute to more sustainable programmes, healthier communities and ultimately more customers.

A largely untapped potential

The transition towards M&E frameworks addressing sustainability in a more rigorous fashion is much welcomed by other WinS stakeholders, some of whom have placed expectations on private actors to strengthen the sustainability component of programmes. In the words of a project officer at a large NGO, “private actors can push projects to be more sustainable”. Furthermore, the senior country officer of a large relief agency explained that NGOs could play a meaningful role by facilitating relations between local communities and government authorities on the one hand, and interested companies on the other. This brokering role is especially relevant in countries with relatively dynamic economies, which offer significant opportunities for engaging local companies and foundations in WinS work. Other informants called for engaging in a dialogue with the private sector around the nature of their contribution to WinS programmes in order to better support conditions for local sustainability and a decreased fixation with mere provision of funds or hardware. Finally, one informant from a large alliance of WASH NGOs suggested that private actors could use their huge leverage in some developing countries to lobby for WinS in their respective national governments.

Indeed, the majority of private sector contributions (typically funds, hardware and sometimes consumables) do not adequately respond to the needs of other stakeholders. Informants consistently stated that the provision of funds or hardware by private actors does not tap into the unique possibilities of companies. In other

words, the private sector rarely brings any specific added-value to the WinS programme. Whilst contributing financial resources is of course always welcome given the chronic lack of funding in the sector, there is a shared feeling that the strengths of private actors could be better exploited. Indeed, when companies go beyond these usual contributions, NGOs often find that partnerships provide them with the opportunity to develop new skills (i.e. marketing or communication skills, and new methodological tools, especially in financial management and, more recently M&E), that can then benefit other projects. In addition, private actors can assume a very productive role by advocating for greater private sector engagement in WinS. Not surprisingly, UNICEF continues to push for a more systematic consideration of such resources (UNICEF 2012). Informants shared a few insightful, current stories supporting the relevance of tapping into this potential: the CEO of a Zambian advertising company, eager to support a large WinS programme, successfully employed his social capital, communication, and marketing skills to rally a wide range of domestic companies and foundations around the initiative. In Kenya, a multinational enterprise partnering in a WinS programme added significant value to the work by activating its networks and leveraging sizeable funding from a global foundation to implement a research project about WinS sustainability challenges.

Satisfactory impact internally

As for the representatives of the private sector, they appear to be unanimously satisfied with their engagement in WinS work, which they find has had a strong, positive impact on their organisations. According to these representatives, the main benefit is the ability to engage with employees and customers by communicating internally and externally about the support to WinS programmes. The sustainability director of a large Latin American foundation considers this reputational impact as a very tangible asset as it helps the company retain its employees who derive a feeling of pride from belonging to the organisation.

In addition to these benefits, engagement can also lead private actors to better understand the environment in which they operate and to gain knowledge and insights into emerging markets. In the view of several informants across all sectors, a

significant advantage companies derive from their participation in WinS programmes is the positive relationships they can forge with central and local government officials. This relationship is considered extremely valuable by the private sector, which sees an opportunity to overcome the deeply ingrained mistrust that generally characterises the relationship between the two sectors in the countries of intervention.

3.3. Building sustainability

Although formal research was used to focus essentially on the impact of WinS work, the persistent challenges faced by schools and their partners to sustain the benefits of programmes in the long-run have led to increasing efforts to better understand the conditions for sustainability. Such insights are critical to promote efficient private sector engagement.

The twin requirements of ownership and accountability

The existing literature has identified ownership and accountability as two essential conditions necessary to foster WinS sustainability, regardless of private sector engagement (IRC 2010; Saboori et al. 2011). At the local level, informants repeatedly emphasised that these conditions are best approached through the engagement and support of headmasters in conjunction with Parent-Teacher Associations and the community. This step is essential to ensure that local stakeholders fully gain control of the programme and hence strive to maintain it once external partners have left. Also, a number of interviewees highlighted how stakeholders' ownership can be strengthened by combining school and community WASH interventions: ultimately, sustainability depends on a durable shift of social norms, which is best achieved if it simultaneously occurs at school and community levels.

In addition, the establishment of clear and transparent lines of accountability at all levels and all stages of a programme, from the provision of funds to (O&M) services is of the utmost importance in order to ensure that stakeholders' relationships foster sustainable WinS services and hygiene behaviour change.

Private actors and sustainability

How does private sector engagement in WinS work influence the sustainability of such interventions?

Regardless of their sector, informants consistently indicated that linking the contribution of private sector partners to their core business is essential in order to enhance the sustainability of programmes.

The main reason put forward by interviewees is that actors who are motivated by profit have a direct stake in effecting behaviour change in order to create and consolidate their profits. In the words of a manager at a leading WASH coalition, "such companies wish to gain a market and to keep it". In the field of WinS, this may encompass markets for items as diverse as soap, feminine care products, and water pumps. From the sample of projects that were surveyed for this report, the companies whose engagement was seen as the most sustainable were generally involved in the business of water, sanitation, or hygiene. In addition, as several informants indicated, the unique contributions of the private actors can significantly increase sustainability, especially in terms of software components and behaviour change.

3.4. Towards a more enabling environment

Informants almost unanimously concurred that private sector engagement in WinS can be significantly enhanced. Understanding the conditions that further foster this engagement requires identifying key enablers and disablers at country level, partnership level, and project level.

Produce bespoke information, think as a business

Many informants stressed the need for greater WinS advocacy towards companies, and in particular the domestic small and medium enterprises, whose frequent motivation to join WinS initiatives often fails to translate into actual partnerships due to difficulties accessing certain data. Representatives from the private sector estimated that companies are not sufficiently aware of the rationale for WinS work and of the impact that their contribution can make. According to the CSR director of a large water technology manufacturer, companies also require information in order to help them identify meaningful connectors between their core business and WinS programmes. Also, these companies need more WinS success stories and some understanding of best practices. In the view of the representative of a multinational enterprise long engaged in WinS

work, a platform dedicated to small and medium enterprises would be instrumental in providing the necessary information to such potential partners.

NGO experts on WASH advocacy highlighted the importance of raising the collective awareness of companies on WinS, by targeting several key individuals in companies beyond the usual one or two persons from the CSR or Public Affairs and Communications departments. How companies acquire this WinS knowledge is equally important. Presenting information in a way that better resonates with the potential partner's business culture and matches their expectations will render this communication more effective. Some informants noted that considering the cultural distance between NGOs and the private sector, peer-to-peer exchanges amongst private partners are preferable to the more traditional advocacy sessions whereby NGO partners "educate" private actors.

Foster ambitious, uninhibited partnerships

In most of the countries where WinS partnerships intervene, the cultural gap between civil society, the private sector and the public sector remains profound. A number of informants thus alluded to the discomfort that a large share of NGOs still experience in partnering with companies. This cross-sector divide needs to be addressed for partnerships to thrive. A more enabling environment therefore calls for working towards dismantling mistrust between different actors, and institutionalising channels of communication and exchange, for instance by creating a multi-sector platform that would serve as a forum for sharing information and knowledge. This ideal environment would require a greater transparency, in particular from the private sector regarding its motivations and interests. It became clear from the interviews that those interests could be made more explicit, as private actors sometimes send inconsistent messages when it comes to their true intentions, which can further complicate the process of cross-sector trust-building.

As a result, several informants voiced the need for the public sector, in particular the MoE, to be more proactive in establishing links with private companies. Given the major role they play in raising WinS in the agenda of the MoEs and their

long-term interest in promoting private sector participation in WinS, UNICEF is arguably in the right position to take the lead in facilitating more constructive relationships between MoE officials and domestic and international private sector actors. Once again, the design of creative PPP policies and frameworks will pave the way for a more significant and sustainable engagement of private partners in the education sector. Nevertheless, significant capacity building at national and local level is required to ensure success. Specifically, a more nuanced comprehension by public sector officials of how the private sector thinks and operates is needed in order to gradually shift perceptions and dissipate negative views. As mentioned in the beginning, further investigation into the perspective of the public sector towards multi-sector-WinS-partnerships would be required.

Water-tight WinS programming

Creating more favourable conditions for a greater engagement of the private sector in WinS work also requires better programming. Providing more hard evidence about the effectiveness of WinS programmes is a logical starting point in order to convince private actors to invest. Research in this area has been supported in recent years and is continually progressing, adopting increasingly sophisticated approaches in order to correlate and attribute health, school attendance and learning performance to WinS interventions (Hunter et al 2014, Jasper and Bartram 2012). A stronger involvement of academic institutions in WinS partnerships was recommended by several informants, including the sustainability director of the foundation of a multinational enterprise, who stressed the need for pragmatic research leading to more effective interventions.

The effectiveness and sustainability of WinS programmes depends to a great extent on stakeholder accountability and the quality of M&E systems. Progress on these two fronts is likely to stimulate the engagement of the private sector. At a macro level, national WinS-related norms and standards for WinS are a fundamental requisite for scaling-up sustainable WinS programmes. This is illustrated by the high relevance of UNICEF-led advocacy work towards government to develop and enforce such regulatory tools. Likewise, it is essential to track the status and progress of

schools, which explains the complementary advocacy efforts for integrating WinS data into the Education Management Information System. The representative of a bilateral donor highlighted how effective such benchmarking tools have shown to be. The availability of such tools, which can help private partners better target schools for higher impact interventions, undoubtedly fosters private sector engagement. Finally, a common set of indicators for success is called for, which would start unifying the language around WinS.

Would broader and longer programmes work better?

Fostering cross-sector integration through programmes blending WinS, health, food security/nutrition, and nature conservation activities could in theory broaden the base of interests of private actors and boost their engagement. Presumably, this could also lead to integrated and more effective M&E systems and accountability mechanisms. Whilst informants generally agreed that such cross-sector integration could theoretically benefit WinS through greater private sector engagement, warnings were expressed about resulting operational challenges (i.e. more complex projects, the difficulty to find NGO partners with the versatile skillset needed, and the risk of mission creep with few activities prioritised over others based on fields of expertise).

As for the timeframe of programmes, whilst longer interventions are generally viewed as boosting sustainability, private actors have a marked preference for shorter timeframes and are typically reluctant to engage in programmes exceeding two to three years. This largely supported view was somewhat nuanced by the observation that domestic private partners appear to be less averse to longer timeframes due to their permanent presence in the country or the region.

4. Discussion

The informants consulted in this study, which *do not* represent the full spectrum of the stakeholder groups involved in WinS programmes (as noted in the sub-section Clarifying project boundaries), consistently supported the view that more ambitious WinS partnerships with the private sector are both required and possible. Depending

on local circumstances (e.g. political, cultural, history) the degree to which this optimism is shared by public agents, local NGOs, school staff, parents and pupils is likely to vary.

An overarching insight derived from this research, however, is that stakeholders engaged in the WinS partnerships (as designated in this study) would benefit from examining the challenge from a higher standpoint and focus on improving three areas: the broader context, the scope and content of partnerships, the nature and quality of the relationships between partners. The following sections explain what this entails, drawing draft recommendations which shall be regarded as a first attempt to structure the efforts to enhance private sector engagement in WinS work.

4.1. Enhancing the broader context of the partnership

Over the long term, the environment in which WinS programmes are designed and implemented must be improved since partnerships will become more ambitious and more attractive when conditions at the macro level foster increased private sector engagement. The implication of central level political actors is crucial: the MoE has an important role to play in institutionalising roles and responsibilities that are independent from elections and personnel turnover. This role would create a stable environment where the conditions for engagement are well known to all partners.

Public support for WinS should also be translated into an integration of WASH standards within national Education Management Information Systems. Not only would this allow for more effective M&E of WinS programmes, but it would also enable project partners to identify where the most critical needs are, and hence where the most impactful interventions lie. The ability to follow interventions over time and to make comparisons across schools is especially important for private actors as they are used to intervene on the basis of objective information when making business decisions and because they currently rely on scarce information. Although NGOs do make baseline studies to gauge the effectiveness of their programmes and to attract their partners, there remains room for a more structured, detailed, and comprehensive overview, provided that the public

sector becomes more systematically engaged in WinS.

Finally, NGOs could showcase the sustainability of WinS and produce robust evidence of its impact, thereby considerably helping to build the CSR (philanthropic, strategic) case for WinS work. Increased public resources should be gradually made more available to cover investment costs in infrastructure, account for O&M through schools' annual operating budgets, and to train a team of motivated, reliable, and controlled inspectors who integrate WASH within their mission. In order for central governments to follow this direction, it is indispensable to maintain advocacy initiatives.

4.2. Creating more and better designed partnerships

A large share of informants view strategic CSR as more effective than philanthropic CSR in achieving high impacts and sustainable results. Building partnerships that are more ambitious in scope and content requires efforts to increase tailored advocacy. A comprehensive advocacy strategy should now be part of WinS programmes in order to target domestic and international potential partners. This must be coupled with guidance for strategic CSR so that private actors can find the specific linkages between WinS programmes and their core business. In this context, the matchmaking role assumed by NGOs becomes critical: NGOs can prepare tailored packages, suited to each partner's profile, that blend contributions addressing the different challenges encountered in promoting WinS. Greater integration between schools and their community would also prove interesting for private actors since the educational environment has the potential for becoming a greater point of entry into local markets. Moreover, cross-sector interventions can broaden the scope for private sector engagement by increasing the number of potential connections between a company and a project.

4.3. Improving the quality of relationships

In order to fully exploit the potential of private sector engagement in WinS programmes, their relationship with NGOs and public authorities must be improved. Indeed, a key finding of this research

is the lack of understanding that these partners have of each other. For instance, companies' focus on quantitative measures of output falls short of the ambition that guides other stakeholders to achieve sustainability. Likewise, the perception that companies should not be involved in schools because they might unduly profit from their position may deter private actors who have strategic motivations for engaging in WinS even if it could be beneficial to the programme. NGOs can facilitate a transparent process allowing partners to learn about each other's incentives, risks and constraints. Greater predictability should ensue.

Trust will grow as a result of accountable relationships, which are more likely to develop if partners are equipped with the knowledge and tools to jointly design the rules governing their partnership.

5. Conclusion

This exploratory research is presumably the first formal attempt to characterise private sector engagement in WinS and examine the means of enhancing it. It comes at a timely moment: relentless advocacy efforts from UNICEF and other large iNGOs to raise WinS in the agendas of donors and governments are gradually paying off, but the level of resources mobilised often remains insufficient to bridge the critical gap in WinS service delivery. The significance of private sector engagement in WinS for bridging part of the funding gap and addressing the challenge of sustained hygiene behaviour change was evidenced by work done in the mid-1990s by a group of private companies, governments and NGOs, supported by donors and research institutions. Despite the lessons learned from these initiatives, the sub-sector has not yet developed the habit of systematically seeking opportunities to build such partnerships.

Thus, although private sector engagement in WinS at present remains very limited in scale and largely ad-hoc, the study suggests a growing interest in the matter from international and domestic companies alike, as well as their foundations. As expected, multinational enterprises active in soap and detergent, food and beverage, pharmaceutical and agro industries stand out as regular partners,

but domestic companies from the same sectors or others (e.g. banking, retail, industry) are also showing a growing interest in WinS. The latter often have greater incentives to sustain their support to programmes.

Fostering the engagement of private sector actors in WinS starts with understanding their incentives. In that respect, the study shows that their motivations remain chiefly philanthropic. When framed under a CSR agenda, engagement is also significantly driven by incentives such as reputational benefits and improved relationships with the government. Interestingly, companies with strong CSR expertise are now explicitly framing their engagement in WinS work as strategic CSR, with the objective of linking their contribution to their core business. Such a strategic CSR engagement is generally seen as having a more positive influence on the sustainability of WinS work as compared to purely philanthropic contributions.

The study shows how the contributions made by private partners are shaped by their incentives, their understanding of the problem and their way of measuring success. Thus, financing the construction of facilities, which leaves tangible traces, provides good visibility and reaches numerous beneficiaries without requiring sophisticated involvement, remains a favoured form of engagement. But practitioners have observed a recent trend towards an increased support for the software components of WinS programmes, and a greater concern for sustainability. But this gradual shift is still too slow for the majority of donors, implementing NGOs and researchers. Whilst the financial support from private partners is welcomed by all, much greater added value is expected from them, notably in the form of marketing, communication and networking inputs.

This study suggests that private companies and their foundations are by and large very satisfied with their participation in WinS. Their interest will presumably keep growing just like their capacity to contribute, financially and otherwise. There is a clear consensus amongst WinS stakeholders in the support of more ambitious partnerships with these partners. Practically, this calls for expanding the number and scope of such arrangements and an

increase in their degree of sophistication. Arguably, any significant steps towards this objective require substantial improvements in the enabling environment. Thus, the current advocacy efforts at the global and country level are imperative to convince governments to embrace WinS as a top priority, which will lead to the development and enforcement of appropriate WinS regulatory frameworks, and the mobilization of more resources for the implementation, O&M and monitoring of WinS services. Ultimately, well-negotiated PPP frameworks clarifying the rules of engagement for private partners will provide them with the level of predictability required for entering into long-term strategic partnerships with the government and civil society, yielding progressive and sustained health, educational, and economic benefits.

Whilst in many countries, the prospect of creating such an enabling environment in the near future seems highly improbable, organisations actively involved in WinS have a responsibility to take the lead and build its foundations. Intensifying structured advocacy towards local private actors is fundamental and should become the standard practise in WinS programmes. Not only do such potential partners need and want to know more about WinS work, the success stories and best practices, they also require guidance on how to connect such initiatives to their own core business.

Addressing the cultural distance and related mistrust between civil society, businesses and the public sector is another key milestone. Dissipating cross-sector prejudices can and needs to be achieved through exchanges fostering mutual understanding between potential partners, by allowing a joint analysis of the respective incentives and constraints, expectations and ways of working of different actors. Trust will build up progressively, but only as a result of accountable relationships between partners. As WinS partnerships succeed in getting private partners more strategically involved in the pursuit of sustainable mutual benefits, achieving good partnership governance and accountability will become a priority.

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Annex. Analytical Framework

1. The nature of private sector engagement

- 1.1. Who are those actors (e.g. international, domestic, companies, foundations...)?
- 1.2. How have the nature of these private actors and their scale of engagement evolved? Who has initiated their involvement?
- 1.3. What are the motivations and interest (e.g. philanthropic, corporate social responsibility, core business) underlying their engagement? Is there an evolution on the type of motivations guiding their engagement?
To what extent does their interest match the purpose of the programme (e.g. improved health, increased school attendance for girls, better education)? To what extent are these interests contradictory, compatible, mutually reinforcing with the interest of the other partners engaged in WinS programmes (e.g. positions of MoE and NGOs re. PPP and the participation of multinational companies)?
- 1.4. Toward which aspect of WinS have private actors contributed (i.e. hardware, software, advocacy) and what has guided that choice? What has been the type of their contribution (e.g. financial, communication, marketing, source of innovation, social capital, material, implementation, monitoring)?
- 1.5. Through what institutional arrangements have private actors contributed to WinS? Is their role coordinated with MoE/MoH strategies?
- 1.6. Are there structural disincentives for the engagement of private actors (e.g. PPP restrictions, branding policies...)?

2. The success of private sector engagement

- 2.1. How has the private sector defined results/success of their engagement?
- 2.2. What is the impact of this engagement on WinS projects?
- 2.3. What is the impact of this engagement on the organisation itself? Has it influenced the core business model or the self-perception of the company's responsibilities? Did advocacy work at firm-level led to wider support of the company to the initiative?
- 2.4. To what extent were the expectations of the various stakeholders met? Why or why not?
- 2.5. What is the impact of this engagement on the sustainability of WinS projects?

3. The challenges to WinS sustainability

- 3.1. What are the main enablers as well as blocks to the sustainability of WinS projects? At central, district, community, school level)?
- 3.2. What can we learn from positive deviants (WinS interventions that are more sustainable in some schools than in others in the same region under the same approach)?
- 3.3. To what extent does the type of interests underlying private sector engagement (i.e., philanthropic vs. strategic) influence sustainability?

4. Towards a more enabling environment (where engagement is better aligned with corporate strategy objectives and gov. policy)

- 4.1. What would be needed (in the design of programmes, in the wider context) to provide private sector actors with a more favourable environment to engage in WinS work?
- 4.2. Would a different timeframe (e.g. longer programmes) affect the degree of engagement of private sector actors? Why?
- 4.3. Would a greater cross-sector integration of various development programmes (WASH, HIV, health, nutrition, nature conservation, rain water harvesting) favour engagement? Why?
- 4.4. Would more advocacy (at national, local level, at firm-level) favour private sector engagement? Why?
- 4.5. Could different and more targeted contributions from private sector actors enhance their engagement? In what respect?
- 4.6. Would more sustainable WinS programmes boost private sector engagement? Why?
- 4.7. Would more effective monitoring and accountability mechanisms boost private sector engagement? Why?

5. Towards more effective private sector engagement

- 5.1. Can private actors provide models or advice to make programmes more sustainable? How can the contribution of private sector actors to WinS programme focus more on enhancing sustainability? (e.g. contributing to more effective monitoring and follow-up mechanisms)
- 5.2. How could WinS programmes strengthen school governance (e.g. budget allocation) and promote greater accountability (compliance, transparency and responsiveness) between local level stakeholders? In what way could private actors contribute to this?
- 5.3. How can incentives of the private sector, donors and partner countries be matched better, in order to generate greater sustainability and fewer obstacles?