

ORAL/POSTER ABSTRACT

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Title (Maximum 10 words / 100 characters)	Improving WASH in Pacific Island schools by embracing local epistemologies
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Topic nominated:	Achieving SDG6 in Pacific Island Countries
Alternative topic:	WASH service delivery beyond households
Short Abstract: Please outline the key messages/lessons/findings to be shared and relevance to WASH practitioners and researchers (Maximum 300 words)	<p>The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim for universal water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) by 2030. It is widely accepted within the sector that we have already picked the “low hanging fruit”, and that as we get nearer to universal coverage it will become more and more difficult for remaining communities to attain safely managed WASH. To inform the programming of Adventist Development and Relief Agency’s (ADRA’s) programmes to bridge this gap in WASH infrastructure, education and behaviours, we were commissioned to prepare a synthesis of the literature relating to improving WASH in schools for girl students and students with disabilities in Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs). The review of the literature highlighted a lack of published information on relevant interventions or practices in PICTs, despite the availability of information on WASH in schools globally.</p> <p>However, this is not indicative of a lack of knowledge within the PICTs context. The literature that is available highlights the importance of student-centred or student-led approaches to improving WASH, suggesting that the contextualisation of programs to local socio-cultural conditions is key to success. Based on the authors’ experiences of participatory action research and indigenist research approaches, we suggest how local knowledge and practices can be incorporated into processes for learning from, and improving WASH for, girl students and students with disabilities. Such a methodology would benefit from giving primacy to local epistemologies, while being informed by published literature as a source of useful information.</p>