Across the Southern Africa region, national office strategies and WASH staff members are highly committed to supporting efforts to reach universal coverage across districts in their respective countries. These efforts are supported by strong relationships with national and local government, and the region’s approach to achieve hygiene promotion and open defecation-free (ODF) sanitation goals in advance of water supply.

Programming is adapting quickly toward the needs of resilience around climate change especially in Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe where seasonal flooding has increased due to extended periods of drought followed by high intensity rainfall. These events have led to a decrease in groundwater recharge which impacts water availability for domestic and productive use.

Challenging economic conditions in the fragile contexts of DRC, Angola, and Zimbabwe have impacted, and will likely continue to greatly impact, WASH initiatives. In Zimbabwe, hyper-inflation caused by economic instability has affected cost of WASH services and supplies; Angola’s economic stability is tied to the volatile global oil market; and internal conflict and prolonged political instability of the DRC has destabilized the already fragile economic conditions where 60% of the population live on less than $1 per day.

In WASH in schools, SAR exceeds MHM standards, ensuring that schools provide privacy, security, and facilities to hygienically manage menstruation with dignity including waste disposal and water for washing to prevent discrimination.

1. High level of achievement toward universal coverage across Southern Africa with an increase in Safely Managed water services.
2. An increased community intensive approach toward governance of WASH services.
3. In Zambia, World Vision is piloting insurance schemes to support resilience of piped-water systems.
4. Improved sanitation outcomes through contextualized government approaches in Zimbabwe (demand-led sanitation) and DRC (Healthy Villages and Schools).
Girl Talk: WASH for menstrual health in schools

Girl Talk, a collaboration between Sesame Workshop and World Vision, is a WASH UP! follow-up curriculum that teaches girls’ empowerment and menstrual management hygiene, as well as addresses myths and misconceptions about puberty. The program was first piloted in Zimbabwe.

An external evaluation following a two-year Zimbabwe pilot showed significant gains including:

- Increased participant knowledge of puberty and menstruation
- Reported dispelling of common myths and misconceptions about menstruation
- Improved girls’ practical knowledge of menstrual cycles

By 2025, Girl Talk aims to reach a minimum of 5,000 girls in Southern Africa including 200 girls per year in the countries of Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.