

E-Magazine

WASH SDG

2017 - 2024



BANGLADESH
ETHIOPIA
INDONESIA
NEPAL
TANZANIA
UGANDA
ZAMBIA

*Changing systems,
changing lives*



A journey towards systems change

Access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene is the most basic human need for health and well-being. Sadly, we must confront the fact that in 2022, 2,2 billion people still lacked safely managed drinking water, 3,5 billion people lacked safely managed sanitation, and 2 billion people lacked a basic handwashing facility. And as a result of climate change half the world's population is already experiencing severe water scarcity at least one month a year.

The good news is that we know that the sustainable development goal to ensure access to water and sanitation for all (SDG6) could be within reach if we intensify our efforts. Great progress can be made with an approach that focuses not just on first-time access to WASH services but aims for systems change, while simultaneously addressing social inclusion, and climate resilience.

Not an abstract goal

This is exactly what the Netherlands WASH SDG Consortium has been working on for the last five years. In our WASH SDG Programme, systems change was not an abstract goal but a day-to-day reality. We have seen it happening in all our 7 countries and 15 sub-programmes. We have seen it in the women who have been stepping up to assert their rights to water and

sanitation and take their role in discussing their needs. We witnessed it in the girls who – for the first time – feel free to talk about menstruation and their need for good toilet facilities.

We see it in the entrepreneurs who have found a new business in providing affordable and sustainable WASH services or products. In the consumers who have started to pay for these services because they recognise the importance of better hygiene for themselves and their families.

Value of participation

We have seen it in government officials that have become true WASH champions and work together with the community to create sustainable and inclusive WASH services. In the WASH committees that have become more and more capable of holding their local governments accountable. In the service providers who feel pride in their work and the progress that has been made and are ready to respond to the growing demand for equitable and sustainable WASH.

We have seen it in the people with disabilities who were not left behind and who realised their right to water and sanitation. We have seen it, and we are proud to share it with you in this magazine.

It has been an impressive journey for all of

us. A journey that included many challenges, such as the global COVID-19 pandemic, which forced us to adapt. A journey that taught us about the complexity of working in totally different contexts, where the roads toward progression can be rough.

Create more change

It has been a journey that challenged our ways of working. In which we reflected on our mistakes and learned how to utilise each other's expertise and network to create more change. But also, a journey that led to many successes, which we are proud of. We present you with a number of these successes so we can learn, replicate and scale-up. Because our job is far from finished.



Dieneke van der Wijk,

Managing Director Simavi and lead-partner of WASH Alliance International



Garance Reus-Deelder

Managing Director Plan International Netherlands



Megan Ritchie

Managing Director Countries, SNV

Working towards sustainable, inclusive and resilient WASH services

Access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) is a stepping stone on the path to escaping poverty and a prerequisite for a decent life. It is essential for the full enjoyment of life in all its facets. It contributes to livelihoods, school attendance and resilient communities and enables women and girls in particular to fully participate in society on equal terms.

Currently more than two billion people lack access to safely managed drinking water. Every 80 seconds a child under five dies of a disease caused by polluted water, and hundreds of millions of children suffer from stunted growth and their potential in life is sharply diminished.

Better management of the role of water in our daily lives leads to more opportunities for sustainable growth. Indeed, it could be said that water is the factor that links the great challenges of our time. From food, energy and biodiversity to migration and urbanisation, we see that water is a common thread.

There is a growing awareness of this. For the first time in history, human activity and practices have put the water cycle, on which we all depend, on an unsustainable course. Adverse interaction between water mismanagement and climate change is

contributing to climate disasters, floods, droughts and storms. We must get serious about water management, because there is no time to waste.

Changing systems, changing lives

The Netherlands is committed to supporting sustainable development, so I am pleased that we are contributing to SDG6 by providing 30 million people with sustainable access to safe water and 50 million people with sustainable access to improved sanitation by 2030.

Launched in 2017 as a five-year multi-country initiative, the WASH SDG programme was established to provide sustainable services to the poorest people, contribute to gender equality and create climate resilient communities in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Nepal, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. The aim of the programme was to work towards more sustainable, inclusive and resilient WASH services.

What's next?

While most of the challenges we face are linked to water, sanitation and hygiene, so are the solutions. We have what it takes to meet our obligation to fulfil the human rights to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene and to put water back on a sustainable track. We

have the scientific knowledge. We have most of the technologies and capabilities. We have the financing, and most importantly, we know how to change the systems.

The Netherlands, as a former co-host of the UN Water Conference, will continue working to ensure access to water, sanitation and hygiene and to share our knowledge and best practices. This magazine presents stories, successes and lessons learned in our efforts to enhance water, sanitation and hygiene systems for all in a sustainable way.

I thank WASH Alliance International, Simavi, Plan International and SNV for their work to sustainably improve access to, and use of, safe drinking water for at least 450,000 people, provide sanitation for at least two million people and improve hygiene measures for 1.6 million people.



Steven Collet

Deputy Director-General for International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

The WASH SDG Consortium



THE WASH ALLIANCE INTERNATIONAL

The **WASH Alliance International** is a multi-national network of over 100 partners worldwide, led by Simavi. WAI works together with local NGOs, communities, governments and businesses to make sure everybody on this planet has sustainable access to water, sanitation and hygiene. The Dutch partners of the WASH Alliance International consist of Simavi, Amref Flying Doctors, Akvo, Aidenvironment (RAIN team), IRC, Practica Foundation, RUAF/Hivos, WASTE, and Wetlands International.



SIMAVI

Simavi is a development organisation that works with partners in 10 countries in Africa and Asia on water and sanitation for all, more equality for women and local climate solutions. Our vision is a climate-just world in which all women and girls can enjoy their human rights to water and sanitation. Within WASH SDG, Simavi is the lead of the WASH Alliance International.



PLAN INTERNATIONAL

Plan International is an international development and humanitarian organisation committed to improving child rights worldwide, with special attention to gender equality for girls and young women. Plan International does this by eliminating the disadvantaged position of girls and young women so that boys and girls have equal opportunities and rights.



SNV

SNV is a mission-driven global development partner working across Africa and Asia. Our mission is to strengthen capacities and catalyse partnerships that transform the agri-food, energy, and water systems, which enable sustainable and more equitable lives for all.

Ram mixing mud and cowdung for the regular maintenance of her house. Kohalpur - Nepal © Simavi

A woman wearing a red headscarf and a blue shirt is washing her hands at a hand pump. The pump is made of metal and is mounted on a wooden post. The woman is leaning over the pump, and water is splashing around her hands. The background shows a rural setting with trees and a building.

Making an impact around the globe

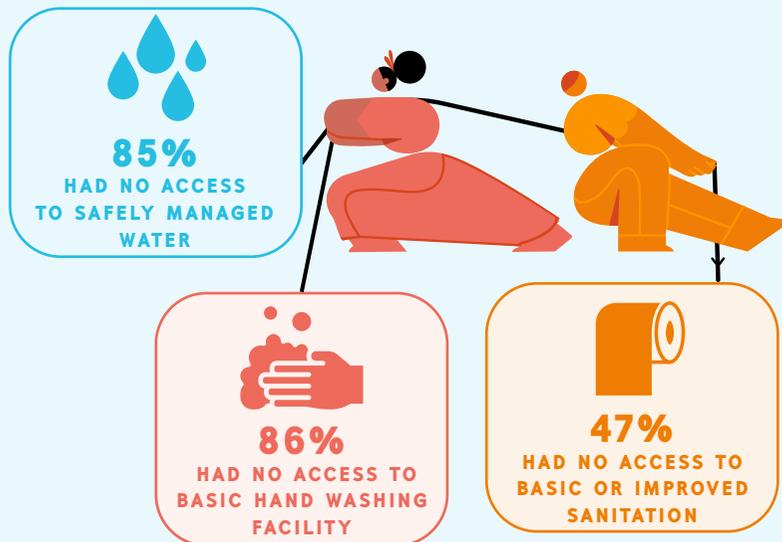
The WASH SDG Programme aimed to sustainably improve access to, and use of, safe drinking water for at least **450,000 people**, sanitation for at least **2 million people** and improve the hygiene behaviours of **1,6 million people**. The programme was implemented in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Nepal, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia through 15 sub-programmes covering 73 sub-national districts.

WASH SDG in numbers

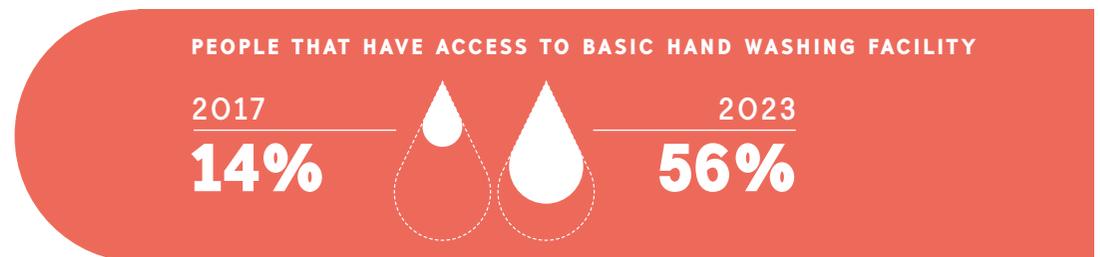
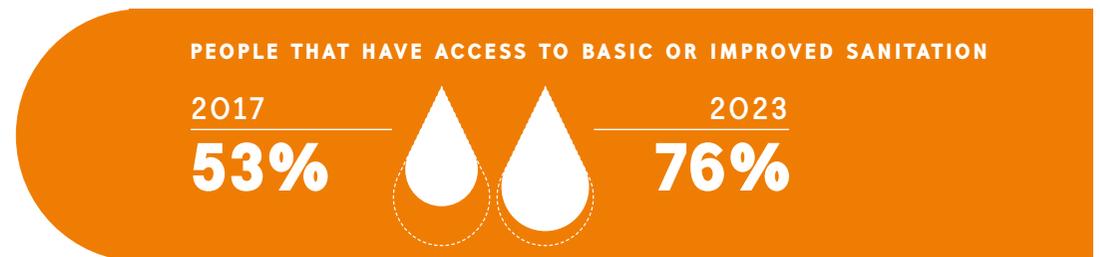
Why working on WASH is so important?

The urgency of reaching universal access to water, sanitation and hygiene cannot be overstated. More than 2 billion people lack access to safe water and basic sanitation, and 3,5 billion to safely managed sanitation. The WASH SDG programme responded to the Dutch government's commitment to contribute to SDG6.

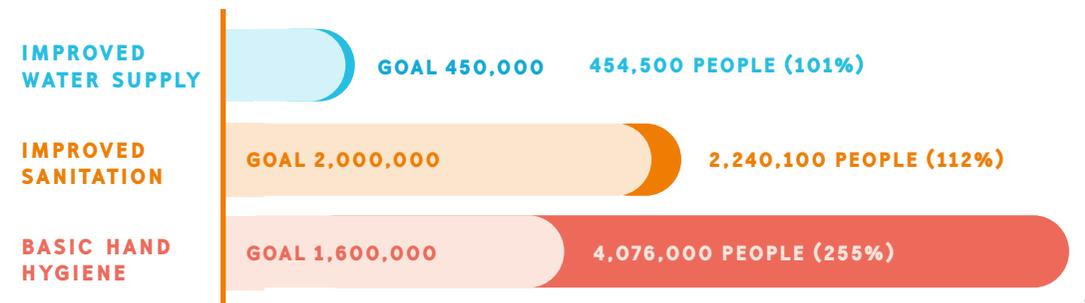
In 2017 in the WASH SDG Programme Areas:



What was accomplished in the WASH SDG Programme areas?



With how much did WASH SDG achieve its targets?



How was impact made in the programme areas?

CHECK OUT SOME HIGHLIGHTS



Explore the highlights by
clicking on the respective
country pins.

Three pathways towards systems change in WASH

“Let’s change lives.” With those words minister Lilianne Ploumen, at the Earth Day celebrations in Washington DC in 2015, started a new commitment by the Dutch government. The Netherlands WASH SDG Consortium was born out of that commitment, initiating a five-year multi-country programme.

The WASH SDG programme was designed to bring together demand for WASH facilities and practices, supply of quality service provision and improved sector governance in a comprehensive approach at a sub-national level. It aimed to do this by supporting government and the WASH system at the sub-national level through policy advocacy and systems strengthening. Enhancing WASH systems involves bolstering the social, technical, institutional, environmental, and financial elements, as well as the various stakeholders and their connections that impact the delivery of WASH services within a specific setting. [The programme was built around a Theory of Change with three pathways, all contributing to sustainable and equitable access to water, sanitation and hygiene.](#)



Sharmila, WASH Champion and community leader, teaches her community about hygiene. Nepal © Plan International



How were these strategies put into practice? [The first pathway](#) is about behaviour change to achieve demand creation. Different steps were identified that would contribute towards behaviour change and increased demand for WASH services and willingness of households to invest in WASH.

Making communities aware by making sure local agencies have the capacity to raise awareness on improved hygiene practices is one such step. Making sure that women and girls, and other socially excluded groups, are aware of their rights and have the capacity to participate actively in WASH discussions was another. Equally important was making family members aware of how WASH needs vary between different genders and ages and talking openly about stigmatised topics such as menstruation.

Effective demand creation

The combination of both local governments and consumers being aware of the need for sustainable and inclusive WASH services and the meaningful participation by women and girls in decision making, indeed proved

an effective demand creation strategy. For example, the evidence shows there is increased demand for washable slabs, handwashing facilities, pit emptying services and menstrual pads. Institutions were strengthened in implementing effective behaviour change methodologies and campaigns.

The second pathway towards change focused on the supply side of the WASH market. When demand for WASH services increases, there is also a need to have affordable products and services available such as, soap, sanitary pads, toilet upgrades, the installation of water filters or pit emptying services. Making WASH service entrepreneurs aware of the need for environmentally sustainable products and services was an important step along with strengthening their capacity to improve their products and business models and respond to the needs of the market.

Financial institutions needed to be made aware and their capacity strengthened to provide financial services for service providers and households. Also, women were encouraged to become WASH entrepreneurs or improve their business. Improving the occupational health and safety of sanitation workers was also integrated in some of the sub-programmes. The goal being improved WASH service provision with prices that are affordable enough to leave no one behind.

There will be no efficient and effective

delivery of inclusive and sustainable WASH services without enabling governments and a strong WASH governance. This third pathway includes many steps. For example, (sub-national) governments must recognise they are duty bearers of the right to water and sanitation and have the capacity to achieve sustainable WASH for all.

Another step is that governments are aware of the importance of transparent and inclusive planning, monitoring and reporting of results and have the capacity to do so. To accomplish this, they have to allocate a sufficient budget that can cover the cost of said plans. For inclusive access, it is essential for governments to incorporate socially excluded groups into WASH decision-making processes. Subsequently, making sure that community-based groups know how to influence WASH policymakers and service providers and hold them accountable is crucial to ensure the improvements in WASH are sustainable.

Significant change

Through these three pathways of behaviour change, improved service provision and strengthened governance, WASH SDG has made a significant change in the 73 geographic areas it has been working in. All sub-programmes have implemented the three strategies in a way that fits their context and the current systems in place. To understand how they have worked towards sustainable change, this e-magazine will provide you with a variety of case stories connected to the three pathways.



Pabitra Thapa Khatayat (left) and Nanda Khatayat (right) who spread awareness on sanitation and hygiene in their village. Surkhet - Nepal. © Simavi

Timeline

CHECK OUT SOME HIGHLIGHTS

On the invitation and with the financial support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Directorate General International Cooperation (DGIS) and Inclusive Green Growth (IGG), WASH Alliance International, led by Simavi, SNV and Plan International submit a proposal for a programme that will bring together demand for WASH facilities and practices, supply of quality service provision and improved sector governance in a comprehensive approach at a sub-national level. In July 2017 the EUR 59 million programme is approved.

The year 2020 was largely defined by COVID-19. The programme remained operational, however, some countries went into partial or even total lockdown, hampering the execution of most activities. Implementation had to adapt. In some cases, the clear link between WASH and COVID-19 prevention helped advance key results of the programme, especially on hygiene. Also, the WASH SDG Consortium received additional funding from DGIS to implement the programme and scale up WASH SDG efforts as the first line of defence against COVID-19: WASH First. Additionally, in 2020, the launch of the Innovation Fund led to the initiation of three innovation projects focusing on WASH in healthcare facilities. These projects were launched in Indonesia, Uganda, and Nepal.

Inception phase

Implementation and learning questions

2017

2018

2019

2020

The birth of the WASH SDG Consortium

In the first half of 2018, all 15 sub-programmes refined programme targets and developed context-specific strategies and action plans for the next five years, together with local governments. From July 2018 onwards, programme implementation started.

COVID-19, WASH First and Innovation Fund

To test the comprehensive approach of the WASH SDG programme and its focus on gender, equality and social inclusion (GESI), a core learning question was developed: To what extent have the approaches to include the excluded in WASH decision making been effective? Tools were developed to track this question, such as a GESI learning wheel and a GESI learning log. Another learning question was developed regarding the implementation of a sustainability clause, compacts and checks (SCCC).

The mid-term review, which was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, provided some important insights. In general, WASH SDG was largely on track to reach its targets. However, progress in lower wealth quintiles remained slow and needed continuing and intensifying efforts to address specific barriers. Main follow-up actions were identified and were included in the annual plan for 2022. Besides GESI and SCCC, another learning trajectory was added, focusing on the link between WASH and climate change and how adaptation and increased resilience can be improved to ensure the sustainability of services.

2021

Mid-term review

Extension granted

2022

The WASH SDG Consortium is applying a systems strengthening approach. This means the programme does not aim to deliver all targets through direct service delivery, but rather by encouraging and supporting the strengthening of national and local governments, the private sector and individual households to provide WASH services themselves. This indirect approach takes time to mature, since extensive engagement with the different stakeholders is needed for them to take up their role in WASH service delivery. Due to the COVID-19 related delay, the Consortium was granted an extension to achieve its targets and to further work on systems strengthening.

In the final phase we have focused on phasing out in a responsible manner and when appropriate and possible, handing over to an in-country partner who will safeguard the results and claim responsibility once funding has stopped. Great progress was made in the increased demand for improved WASH facilities and practices, the quality of service provision and the improved governance of the sector. During this process, we focus on harvesting the learnings across all sub-programmes and using this information for the advantage of the wider WASH sector. Together we look back at a journey of learnings and successes.

2023

Responsible exit

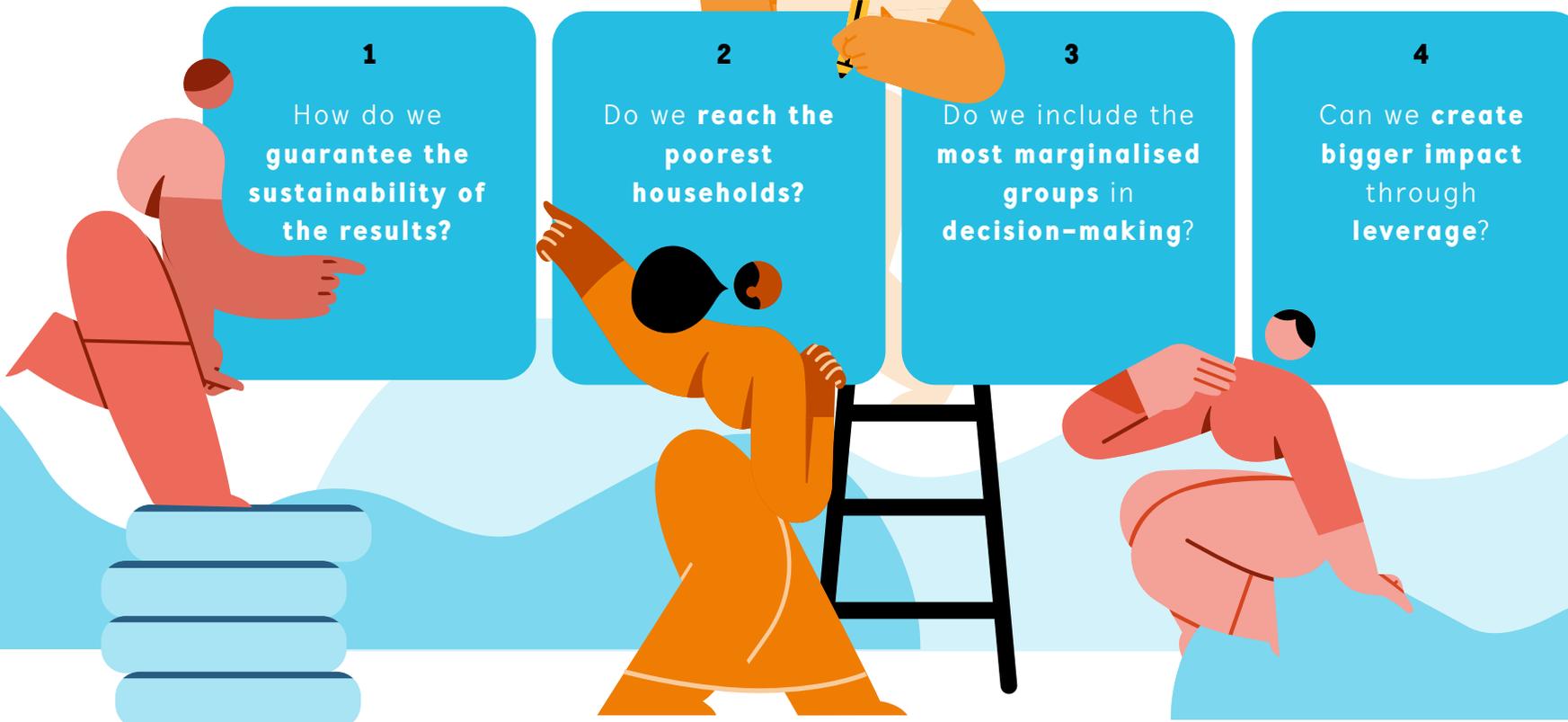
2024

“ **TOGETHER WE
LOOK BACK AT A
JOURNEY OF
LEARNINGS AND
SUCCESSSES.** ”

Measuring impact: asking the more difficult questions

The WASH SDG programme exceeded its targets, but systems change demands that we also answer the more profound questions that cover the inclusivity and sustainability of our outcomes. Throughout the implementation phase, we have challenged ourselves

to answer these questions and learn from our successes and failures. As such, gender equality and social inclusion, sustainability compacts and working closely with local governments were important parts of the sub-programme.



1

How do we guarantee the sustainability of the results?

One of the key features of the WASH SDG programme was its focus on building relationships with sub-national authorities. Sustainability compacts were made part of all MoUs signed by local governments. . **These compacts established commitments, roles and responsibilities for WASH services during and after the programme.** Making the compacts part of the MoUs obligated partners to focus on sustainability at an early stage of the discussions with local authorities. It also facilitated rich and substantial dialogue on roles and responsibilities during and beyond the life of the programme. It allowed to further develop relationships with country stakeholders and build trust. This was a huge achievement and highlights the fact that processes like this need time and investment. On average the sustainability indicators (financial, institutional, environmental, technical and social sustainability) improved with 15 per cent between 2021 and 2023.

SUSTAINABILITY COMPACTS WERE SIGNED BY 72 LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

2

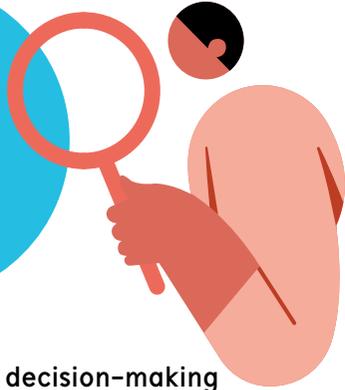
Do we reach the poorest households?

The poorest households generally have less access to WASH services and products, such as adequate sanitation. **Throughout the programme, the focus on low-income households and pro-poor strategies were used to make sanitation services more affordable to the poorest households.** An example is scheduled desludging in Zambia in which they worked towards a monthly affordable fee instead of a big lump sum that low-income households could not afford. Pro-poor WASH subsidies, both full and partial, advocated for by the sub-programmes and subsequently provided by the government, were also utilised to create more affordable services. And in Bangladesh, SNV advocacy led to the city authorities' agreement to implement a subsidised service as well as enforcement of occupational health and safety guidelines for pit emptiers who often work under strenuous and unsafe labour conditions.

THE GAP BETWEEN THE ACCESS TO BASIC SANITATION BETWEEN THE POOREST HOUSEHOLDS AND THE WEALTHIEST HOUSEHOLDS DECREASED BY 26% AND FOR SAFELY MANAGED SANITATION THIS DECREASED BY 11%

3

Do we include the **most marginalised groups** in decision-making?



Being able to participate and influence the WASH decision-making process is very important for socially excluded groups. Having their challenges and considerations taken into account, leads to better access to WASH facilities for underrepresented groups. **Sub-programmes actively involved women and girls, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, older persons and people in the lowest income bracket.** An increase in participation was achieved through the development of gender equality and social inclusion action plans at municipal and city level, the formation and empowerment of women's groups, training and capacity building programmes, working with government officials on social inclusion, the creation of platforms for women's voices, and sensitization efforts on inclusion. In the end, sub-programmes had reached or nearly reached their target with women attending meetings, speaking and influencing WASH-related decisions and with active participation of excluded groups in WASH-related meetings.

PARTICIPATION IN THE WASH DECISION MAKING PROCESS IMPROVED FROM "NO PARTICIPATION" TO "REPORTED INFLUENCE ON THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS"



4

Can we **create bigger impact** through **leverage**?

Different strategies were utilised to ensure that investments made by WASH SDG, would stimulate further investments by households, governments, financial institutions and the private sector, creating a multiplier-effect. The gender equality and social inclusion community led total sanitation approach was designed to work in partnership with the government and it helped households in 100 villages in Indonesia become open defecation free and move up the sanitation ladder. The local government then took ownership of the approach and replicated it in more than 300 new villages in the third and fourth year of the programme, with Plan International in a supporting role. Leverage also works on household-level. When WASH services are inclusive, and citizens are sensitised on the importance of WASH, they are more likely to invest as well. This can for example be seen in WAI Bangladesh, led by Simavi, in which the percentage of households that invested in WASH facilities or services went up from 48% to 95%. In Nepal and Uganda, there were also significant improvements.

INVESTMENTS BY WASH SDG ARE AMPLIFIED BY INCREASED INVESTMENTS BY HOUSEHOLDS, GOVERNMENTS, FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR





pathway 1

Behaviour change interventions

Raising awareness is often the first step towards behaviour change. In the following section you will find examples of how behaviour change contributes towards increased demand for improved WASH facilities and practices was achieved.

The combination of both local governments and consumers being aware of the need for sustainable and inclusive WASH services, and the meaningful participation of women and girls in decision making, proved to be an effective demand creation strategy.

Children wash their plates at school. Zambia
© Plan International

Breaking down taboos in Indonesia

Empowering girls through menstrual education

Fourteen-year-old Sholeha from Indonesia decided to become a peer educator on menstrual health, aiming to shatter the stigma, dispel myths and ensure girls feel informed and secure during menstruation. To ensure equitable use of WASH by all, the WASH SDG programme recognises that men and women should be aware of the different roles, responsibilities and needs in WASH, which include menstruation.

By: Herie Ferdian and Annisa Hanifa

In many places around the world talking about menstruation is still taboo. This also applies to Indonesia. Without the proper knowledge, girls often grapple with fear, misinformation, and confusion when they experience their first menstruation. Sholeha (14) went through this herself. She recounts her initial confusion when she got her first period and remembers being reluctant to discuss it. Her mother provided little information about her menstruation and her father did not participate in the conversation at all. While at school, many of her friends were confused as well. Frustrated by the lack of knowledge, Sholeha jumped at the chance to learn more as a peer educator and share this knowledge with her friends.

Sholeha and her peers during a class on menstruation, health and hygiene.
© Plan International

“No girl should be restricted because she menstruates!”



Sholeha

Through Plan International Indonesia, Sholeha received training on community-based total sanitation (STBM) and menstrual health and hygiene (MHH). Since 2019, she has informed many of her peers and gladly answers all the questions that leave them bewildered.



"I am really happy that now I don't have to leave school when I am menstruating."



Sholeha teaching other students about menstrual health © Plan International

Challenge the stigma

Sholeha is deaf and attends a special needs school (SLB). Students of the SLB have different degrees of disability which pose one of Sholeha's biggest challenges as a peer educator. However, Sholeha's interesting and exciting approach keeps her schoolmates from being shy when discussing menstruation. Working as a peer educator has made an impact on her life. "I am really happy that now I don't have to leave school when I am menstruating since there are menstrual hygiene facilities available in school and hopefully there will be girl-friendly toilets in other schools and public spaces too", explains Sholeha. Many girls stay home during their period since they are unable to safely or hygienically manage their menstruation without the proper hygiene and sanitation facilities. As a peer educator, she has the power to

challenge the stigma that is often associated with menstruation. She explains that girls are often teased and menstruation is considered to be dirty. She actively challenges this idea by ensuring male students and the school management are included in the debate on menstruation. This has made a difference: the toilets have been made accessible for all students and now include menstrual products and bins.

Going international

Since Sholeha has proven herself as a strong MHH advocate, she was invited to the Women Deliver conference in Rwanda in July 2023 to convey her message. In Rwanda, surrounded by policy makers and academic experts, Sholeha explained what girls like her need. But more importantly, how they are restricted if their needs are not met. It is not only important to make menstrual products available in schools, but the stigma around menstruation should be fought to ensure girls can have a dignified menstruation.

Learn more about Sholeha, watch her video [here](#)

MAKING AFFORDABLE AND HYGIENIC MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS AVAILABLE

To ensure girls and women can manage their menstruation with dignity, the availability of affordable and hygienic menstrual products is key. Often households do not prioritise spending money on menstrual products, which leads to papers or cloth being used as pads. Within WASH SDG, Plan International trained teachers and healthcare workers to create reusable pads of material they have at home. Together with local

governments, Plan International trained entrepreneurs to increase the access to menstrual products, even in remote areas. Lastly, they work on increasing the knowledge of parents about menstruation to ensure they are willing to invest in menstrual products. This strategy increases the supply and demand for menstrual products, ensuring girls and women can go about their day, while menstruating, without worries.

The behaviour-changing power of a digital self-monitoring tool

Innovation in Nepal



Community members working with the self-monitoring tool. Nepal © Simavi

How do you ensure and properly measure that the WAI WASH SDG sub-programme in Nepal is achieving its targets? And how do you inform the local government so they can make appropriate WASH plans? Simavi and partners of the WAI WASH SDG-programme, put a lot of effort in achieving this. At the programmatic and national level, progress is regularly measured. For example, by using the indicators from the **JMP ladder**. These are designed to benchmark and monitor drinking water, sanitation and hygiene levels across countries worldwide. However, until recently, locally-led recurring data collection was not being practised, which makes it hard for communities to monitor their progress.

Cross-country learning

In 2022, during a cross-learning visit to Bangladesh, the Nepal team witnessed the community practising a self-monitoring approach to ensure hygiene practices were followed. Inspired by this, the team brought the approach back to Nepal and designed

Comparing scores and reaching the next level: a digital self-monitoring tool turned out to be a major motivator for local communities in Nepal to progress towards safely managed water and sanitation services. The tool was born out of a WASH SDG cross-learning visit to Bangladesh.

By Pragati Bajracharya

Simavi and partners of the WAI WASH SDG sub-programme in Bangladesh, introduced a self-monitoring tool to empower community members by granting them access to their own results and understanding of their progress in water, sanitation, hygiene, disaster preparedness, and gender practices. Every six months, WAI's partners conduct community-based monitoring sessions for all households. At the conclusion of these sessions, scores from the previous period are compared, enabling households to observe their own advancements. Follow-up actions include house visits or linking households with micro-finance institutions or entrepreneurs to bolster their scores. The sub-programme has witnessed an increase in household investments in WASH services and products due to the newfound awareness of WASH and the connections facilitated by the sub-programme.

The percentage of households consuming safely managed drinking water had risen from 13% to 31%

a digital self-monitoring tool to track household progress on the JMP ladder.

Self-assessment by 1,746 households

Later that year, WASH Alliance partners Simavi and Sahakarmi Samaj conducted the first pilot of the community-based self-monitoring tool in Nepal. A total of 87 community groups, comprising 1,746 households assessed themselves based on WASH indicators such as the use of safe water for all activities, the cleanliness of the latrines and handwashing practices. The assessments were done during regular community group meetings, on reusable sheets which allowed active participation by attendees.

Sense of competition

Simultaneously, community educators entered the data through a mobile app and, based on their response, each household received a final score on a scale of 4 along with their JMP ladder status. This created a sense of competition among community members. For example, after the self-assessment 47 households conducted water quality tests because it was a

requirement for achieving the safely managed status. In addition to scoring better in the assessment, households became more aware of the quality of their drinking water and had through the received training adjusted their behaviour and thereby improved their score.

The impact of comparing scores

The strength of the tool lies in the community approach in which social pressure increases correct scoring of households and subsequently extra motivation to improve their scores at the next assessment. A second round of self-assessment, six months later, confirmed this. The percentage of households consuming safely managed drinking water had risen from 13% to 31%. Additionally, the percentage of households consuming water from either unimproved sources or surface water decreased from 3% to 0% and the percentage of households practising safely managed sanitation services rose from 63% to 84%. Open defecation decreased from 2% to 0.16%.

Use of data

Steps have also been taken to further collaborate with the local government to use the data for monitoring activities and for service providers to utilise this periodic data for planned and accountable service delivery.

Self assessment
being carried out
in Bangladesh
© Simavi



Interested in other elements of the systems approach used in the Nepal sub-programme?

Watch [this video](#) about how water safety plans made a difference in Nepal.



Hasso Sadhu holding a meeting on hygiene and sanitation in Faji Sole © Amref Health Africa

Community-led total sanitation and hygiene (CLTSH) involves facilitating a process to inspire and empower rural communities to stop open defecation and to build and use latrines for their households. This is done without offering external subsidies to purchase hardware such as pans and pipes.

Through WAI in Ethiopia, led by Amref Health Africa, the WASH SDG programme implemented the CLTSH approach in the Oromia region, more specifically in the Negele Arsi and Shashemene districts of West Arsi Zone.

Ending open defecation

Hasso Sadhu is living in Faji Sole, in the Shashemene district. He is married and has eight children. He makes a living from farming and grows organic vegetables, fruits, spices and herbs. As a community leader and member of the CLTSH committee, he has been holding regular meetings with households on hygiene and sanitation including topics such as ending open defecation, demanding improved slabs and identifying and paying attention to villages that had households without toilets. He also engages in informal conversations with people using any opportunity that presented itself, like at religious and other local social gathering places. CLTSH is a sanitation promotion based on the assumption that no human being can stay unmoved once they have learned that, through

Investing in latrines in Ethiopia

How a community leader inspired his fellow villagers

Poor access to adequate sanitation, resulting in the practice of widespread open defecation (OD), has negative health and social impacts on communities. Particularly, in terms of diseases such as diarrhea and cholera. In Ethiopia, WASH Alliance International (WAI) successfully applied the community-led total sanitation and hygiene approach for sustainable change.

By Samuel Girma, Adaba Mekonnen, Tamene Chaka and Kulule Mekonnen



Through increased access, more households now have a latrine. Kerya Bashed, was one of the first in her community to install an improved household latrine in her backyard. © Amref Health Africa

polluted water, flies, fingers and fields, they are ingesting other people's faeces. Generally, communities react strongly and immediately try to find ways to change this through their own effort.

Mobilising the community

Hasso said, "Through the WASH SDG programme I was capacitated on how to mobilise the community for demanding improved latrine options and ending open defecation, that helped me and my village communities." Several challenges had to be overcome, for example the idea that latrines are not necessary if there is enough bush and spaces for defecation. Another one is that people ask NGOs and the government to provide them with the slabs to construct latrines. "The regular meetings were used to

ensure that the community is supporting the CLTSH approach. And that the commitment to attain the open defecation free status is supported by all people. This has led to the open defecation free declaration and certification of our community", said Hasso. In all the targeted communities, festive celebrations were organised with rituals, music and food. The aim has been to acknowledge the collective achievements and to encourage scaling up and replication within other communities. Certificates of recognition were given to all communities and community leaders who played a significant role in achieving ODF status.

Privacy

The programme also changed Hasso's own use of latrines. "Before I used a pit latrine covered with wooden logs without superstructure and handwashing facility. The latrine at that time lacked privacy, it was not clean and unsuitable for families." Awareness was not the only issue. "I know using an improved sanitation facility helps to promote the wellbeing of my family. But access to a safe, durable and sustainable slab was a challenge before, even if there was capacity to buy." Hasso was happy to hear that Amref Health Africa had organised, trained and equipped unemployed youth on the production of slabs, i.e. cleanable covers for pit latrines. "When I visited the kebele centre where they started sanitation production, I bought a rectangular concrete slab of 1,200 birr." (EUR 23, equivalent to 40% of his monthly income). The programme has contributed to developing a sanitation market that increases access to sanitation

products, maintenance and services.

Clean floor

"Now, me and my family are using a latrine with a clean floor which is free from faecal contact, fly proof and odour free. We are delighted with the new latrine. We can wash our hands with water and soap after visiting the toilet. We are also preparing to make the superstructure with more durable materials, like corrugated iron sheet and strong and termite resistant woods and mud. My neighbors also started buying concrete slabs and fixing them to make their latrines easily cleanable and durable. And I will continue to teach and support my fellow villagers to sustain the open defecation free status and access to improved latrine options."

Negele Arsi and Shashemene districts of West Arsi Zone have WASH sustainable development goal master plans with the target of reaching at least basic WASH services for everyone. You can read more on the use of these master plans.

One way to make WASH accessible for all, is by decreasing the costs. Learn more about other strategies that target hard-to-reach areas, the poor and people living in remote or slum areas.



Changing mindsets and behaviour

Improving gender equality through WASH interventions.

A means to make individuals, families and communities grow in a more equal direction – that is what the gender and WASH monitoring tool has proven to be.

A story about positive change: Mr Mulumba, the husband of Charity Mulumba, notes “This made me realise that I was very unfair to my wife who used to do everything alone”.

By Charles Simabwachi, Eric Malyangu, Neky Nitbani and Tyas Hering Ekaristi

“Household chores such as fetching water, cooking and bathing children are a woman’s duty. And leadership and participation in the community is a man’s job.” Convictions like these are rooted in gender inequality. This can have a detrimental effect on the effectiveness and sustainability of WASH programmes. Changing mindsets and behaviour is necessary to improve women’s participation and decision making at household and community level. With the gender WASH monitoring tool (GWMT), Plan International was able to make a difference

Domoiggus Nunes, a project participant from Kenibibi, Belu feeding his child © Plan International

in all the five countries of the Plan International sub-programmes.

Gender equality

The tool aims to monitor changes in gender relations in WASH by focusing on four indicators: WASH workload in households; influence level in household decision making; participation level in WASH in the community; and the level of women leadership in the community.

It helps WASH staff and partners to develop their understanding of, and skills in, gender analysis and the role that WASH can play in promoting gender equality. It also helps to develop practical skills for gender monitoring and collecting sex-disaggregated information about strategic gender changes, assess changes over time and use this information to improve practice.

In communities the approach is used to explore and raise awareness about gender roles and relationships in household and community WASH activities. And to promote gender equality by providing opportunities for women and men to discuss gender relations and to set their own agenda for change.

Household chores

In Chongwe Kafue area in Zambia it is customary that women do more household chores than their male counterparts. But this has started to change, explains Charity, participant of the programme in Zambia. She says her husband was not used to helping with any form of household chores. “It was after attending the training in gender and WASH

monitoring in Shiyala village, that my husband has significantly changed his behaviour towards household chores. He now does chores such as fetching water for domestic use without asking for help from me.”

Charity also called on other women to encourage their husbands to get more involved in household chores. Her husband adds: “The training provided a different perspective on how to contribute to maintaining my household, and this made me realise that I was very unfair to my wife who used to do everything alone.”

Shared decision making

In Indonesia, the sub-programme worked in four districts across two provinces: Mataram and Lombok Tengah in Nusa Tenggara Barat (NTB) province, and Belu and Malaka in Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) province. Local customs have so far emphasised that household affairs are women’s duties, while men are to work outside the house.

However, real positive changes came out as a result of the GWMT learning process in the past few years, both in households and at the community level. The men stated that joining GWMT sessions made them realise that housework should be done together to lighten the burden and that it is a shared responsibility. Decision making within the household has also seen positive changes. “I realised that now it is necessary to involve my wife before deciding on something. We discussed together in the

Domoiggus Nunes, a project participant from Kenibibi, Belu with his child © Plan International

family, with the wife and children, for example about the toilet, liquid waste disposal, hand-washing facilities, etc. We work together now,” said Wahyudin, a 41-year-old man in Mataram.

Women as leaders in the community

The opening of public spaces encourages women to learn and bring out their best potential and become a leader. “It used to be only men who took the lead. Our grandparents always said women cannot do it. After a session using the GWMT, there was awareness and women began to be empowered. Women become the official community leaders, village officials, and become members of village representatives”, said Imaculata, an elderly woman from Malaka.

Not overnight

These changes did not happen overnight, yet these stories in both Indonesia and Zambia illustrate that when one or two people have shown change it will spread to more people. The gender and WASH monitoring tool is not an end but a means to make individuals, families and communities grow in a more equal direction.



DISCOVER AND EXPERIENCE

Would you like to know more about the tool?

Would you like to see the tool in action? Watch the video from Plan International Indonesia

A young woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a vibrant red and yellow sari with a green border, is smiling as she washes her hands at a public water tap. The tap is mounted on a concrete pillar. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and structures. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

pathway 2

Available and affordable services

Increasing awareness and demand for WASH services should go hand in hand with improving the availability and affordability of WASH products and services. In the following section you will find examples of how this was achieved within the WASH SDG programme.

One example is making WASH service entrepreneurs aware of the need for environmentally sustainable products and services. Another example is developing business models based on products or services affordable to even the most vulnerable households.



The next big challenge for safely managed sanitation

Faecal sludge management in Nepal

Nepal was declared an open-defecation-free country in 2019. With most of Nepal now using toilets, the safe management of faecal sludge has become a priority development issue to mitigate the risk of polluting surface and groundwater. To prevent a health crisis, SNV has been working with the Government of Nepal to improve sanitation conditions and raise residents' water security in the cities of Chandannath, Birendranagar, Nepalgunj, and Khadak.

By Nadira Khawaja and Abhaya Sigdel

Sanitation worker safely releases collected sludge in the Birendranagar FSTP © SNV

"The stench is unbearable in the summer." Ramdin Yadav, a resident of Nepalgunj, is very much aware of the problem of faecal sludge. So is Dwarika Prasad, another resident of Nepalgunj. "Because pipes from the toilets are connected to the drains, faecal sludge is discharged directly into the open environment. There are many households... and [their] sludge is disposed here."

Nepalgunj is one of many municipalities in Nepal struggling with this problem. Prakash Paudel, Senior Officer within the Birendranagar municipality says: "We made toilet access and use mandatory for all households. After mandating toilets, providing the facilities for the proper management of faecal sludge throughout the service chain is also important. If we fail to manage faecal sludge properly, it will give rise to water pollution problems."

Inclusive and sustainable services

It is a complicated problem, requiring an integrated approach. Serving vulnerable communities is essential, says Ami Reza, former Country Director of SNV in Nepal and now

Global Technical Advisor-GESI for SNV. "What's really important is to strengthen the systems. Where urban sanitation becomes the priority for municipalities, it serves communities that are currently underserved and provides them with the opportunity to live healthy, happy lives."

In Birendranagar, a faecal sludge treatment plant (FSTP) has become operational since September 2021, making safely managed sanitation services available for 29,481 people. In Khadak, a trench – a safe and nature-based dumping ground for sludge – has been operational since September 2019, serving approximately 9,000 households. The site has now been closed and the incumbent mayor of Khadak has secured another trenching site for the coming 10 years.

In Chandannath, a trench for faecal sludge management (FSM) has been operational since July 2023, serving 4,271 households. Govinda Bahadur Neupane, a resident, provided land for the trench. "Faecal sludge will turn into manure, which can be useful for plants and trees like apples and walnuts."

In Nepalgunj, after a multi-stakeholder informed choice process, a detailed plan for the construction of an FSTP has been prepared with the support of SNV. According to Uma Thapa Magar, its Deputy Mayor: "We have anticipated that faecal sludge management will be a big problem in 10 years' time."

Systems strengthening

"The infrastructure helps, but systems strengthening is the most important part," says Ami Reza. "We work with municipalities to run these in an efficient and effective way. We also work with private sector partners, working to develop [corporate] bylaws. And we're working on business models so that the service chain can be financially sustainable."

Sita Gautam, an FSM service provider from Birendranagar says, "The demand has increased in recent times compared to the past. When we send the vehicle for one service, we immediately receive interested callers from other locations. So, to capitalise on the growing demand, we are considering purchasing an additional truck."

For SNV, shares Ami Reza, "The ultimate goal is to have sustainable service chain progress, and that's why we're working with municipalities on their plans, strategies, and investments for the future. Sustainability has always been key to the WASH SDG programme."

MORE ABOUT FAECAL SLUDGE MANAGEMENT IN NEPAL

Watch the video explainer why FSM is among the biggest challenges in Nepal

AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO URBAN SANITATION

SNV applied its Urban Sanitation and Hygiene for Health and Development (USHHD) integrated approach in five countries covered by the WASH SDG programme. The USHHD addresses the entire sanitation chain, contributing to the realisation of inclusive and sustainable city-wide sanitation services. Programmatic components of the USSHD are:

- strengthening capacities to institutionalise effective behavioural change communication on issues of safely managed sanitation and hygiene,
- developing safe and affordable sanitation and hygiene consumer services for different population segments,
- improving local treatment, disposal, and reuse options, making them environmentally safe, socially acceptable, and financially sustainable,
- scaling up a city-wide service delivery framework, which is co-developed with local authorities and stakeholders, and supported by enforcement and regulation protocols, and
- building capacities and systems for the sustainable cost recovery of city-wide sanitation services, supported by smart financing and investments.

Fighting the effects of climate change by planting trees

Resilience strengthening in Uganda

Akidi Grace worries about the impact of climate change. She has seen floods and drought becoming more frequent and severe in Uganda and this affects the access to safe drinking water and water used for agriculture in her community. Deforestation is adding to the problem. Simavi and partners of the WAI WASH SDG-programme have initiated a movement to protect trees and water sources to create more climate resilience in the area.

By Irene Namusu and Rithwan Kalinaki

Grace is a schoolteacher living in Kamrono, a village in the Lira Kato sub-county of the Agogo district, where the drinking water crisis is a cause for deep concern. "Between January and April last year, the shallow wells that I used to get water from for domestic use dried up. I had to walk three kilometres to the nearest borehole, and always had to wait in a long queue to access water, which is also hard to pump", she explains. With no more than four years in existence, Kamrono is a newly re-established community. It was initially vacated as people fled to town centres, following the Northern Uganda's insurgency that lasted over 15 years from about the mid-90s. Coming from an internally



Akidi Grace

displaced people (IDP) camp where they had to rely on handouts, people settling in Kamrono had to rebuild their livelihood. However, this has not been easy due to the area's limited opportunities.

Prolonged droughts

Those who engage in agriculture have suffered tremendous losses due to prolonged droughts and irregular rainfall patterns. This is also the case for Akidi whose recent harvest failed as her crops got scorched by the hot sun. As farmers are increasingly challenged by the uncertainty and variability of the weather, many have resorted to charcoal production as an alternative source of income. Yet, this comes with a high environmental price. Charcoal burning is one of the main drivers of deforestation which can lead to increased drought and water scarcity. The situation here is an example of how limited livelihood options can drive communities to sacrifice long term benefits of standing trees for short term economic gains.

Agroforestry as the solution

A movement is under way to restore lost tree cover and initiatives around re-greening Kamrono and the neighbouring villages are gaining traction. Under the WASH SDG programme, several trainings are organised around agroforestry – the growing of both trees and crops on the same piece of land. For Grace, this training made all the difference. "I have acquired knowledge and skills about

agroforestry, and I have already planted one acre of grevilia trees to keep my garden moist, so that when I intercrop [trees] with my crops they can survive the strong sunshine." Other initiatives that strengthen communities' resilience against climate change include trainings on setting up tree nurseries and the improvement of soil and water conservation structures to better cope with environmental changes. This has helped people in Kamrono to manage their ecosystems more effectively and improve their productive land, which provides fertile ground for a more stable livelihood.

Training sessions are paying off

Abwola Nekolina, a peasant farmer in Karmono, also sees that her efforts to participate in the training sessions are paying off. "I now understand that bush burning, tree cutting and encroachment on wetlands have negative effects on the environment and these contribute to climate change. We were trained on how to adapt to climate change. I learnt to raise tree seedlings, plant and manage agroforestry. They

also trained me on water management in my garden by digging trenches to retain water and control soil erosion", she says. Being an elder and leader in her community, Abwola has sensitised other community members on climate change after participating in the trainings. So far, a total of eight hectares of land has already been planted with trees. Through agroforestry, there is a decrease of flooding and it changed the area's microclimate to be cooler. Additionally, there has been a noticeable improvement in the productivity in the soils in the area. In the long run, agroforestry will contribute to improved groundwater levels and thereby improved availability of water in the shallow wells in the area. Agroforestry is one of the techniques to adapt to and mitigate climate change in the area and make agriculture sustainable.



Abwola Nekolina

Climate change has a big impact on WASH. Droughts, extreme weather and flooding are a threat to the sustainability of WASH services. Due to this important link, the WASH SDG Consortium decided that WASH and climate would become one of the learning trajectories of WASH SDG. The trajectory created a peer-to-peer learning community to share experiences and knowledge on WASH and climate change with the aim of strengthening capacities and knowledge around WASH and climate issues within the WASH SDG Consortium and improve the sub-programmes. These learnings have been externally communicated in different manners, such as **a case study**, **a podcast** and **an online session**.

An affordable and sustainable sanitation service in Zambia

Scheduled desludging

In Zambia, SNV's partnership with the Lukanga Water Supply and Sanitation Company has made it possible for the majority of Kabwe town's residents to gain access to safely managed toilet emptying services.

By Maria Carreiro and Emily Banda

Faecal sludge management (FSM) services are essential for the safe storage, emptying, transport, and disposal of human waste in urban areas. In the town of Kabwe, the capital of the Central Province of Zambia, 79% of its 188,878 population is not connected to the sewer system. If no safe alternative is offered, the capital's high dependence on pit toilets, cesspools, and septic tanks will contaminate the living environment and water sources. Residents in peri-urban areas typically use pit toilets that cannot be emptied safely without professional help. People tend to abandon

Manual emptiers wearing protective gear for their own safety
© SNV

toilets once they are full and dig new ones. However, with space increasingly becoming limited in densely populated Kabwe, people often resort to having their pits emptied in the cheapest way possible, even if it is unsafe. Not all toilets are emptiable, as unlined latrines tend to collapse during the emptying process. This poses a risk to emptiers.

About scheduled desludging

Together with Lukanga Water Supply and Sanitation Company (LgWSSC), SNV designed a sustainable sanitation programme, introducing



improvements in operations, customer service, infrastructure, regulations, institutions, procedures and finances. The partnership offered training on strategy development for FSM, financial planning, behaviour change communication, customer management, GIS mapping and operational schemes.

Scheduled desludging was introduced as part of these improvement measures, replacing the random emptying of containments. Preventing sludge overflow, it offers a pre-timed emptying schedule, allowing the FSM managing entity to plan and deliver emptying services in an organised manner. In effect, making the services more cost-effective and financially sustainable.

Better affordability

A more inclusive tariff system was developed, enabling service subscribers to pay a small monthly fee of EUR 0.67 for an emptying cycle of two years. The system made the service more affordable, even among the poorest, in contrast to the traditional lump sum payment of EUR 24.

With affordability significantly increased and strong marketing conducted by LgWSSC, the subscription for scheduled emptying quickly expanded, especially in low-income areas. Within six months of its introduction, the adoption rate of Kabwe's Kamushanga settlement reached 92%.

Robust operations

Increased subscriptions enhanced predictability in service demand and revenue collection, leading to improvements in operations. Overall, scheduled desludging arrangements are already showing positive signs, raising the viability of sanitation businesses and their appeal for private sector investments.

To create more robust operations, a reevaluation of the workforce, specifically emptiers, was also explored. A policy and regulatory environment that professionalises emptying services was strengthened, helping elevate the status of sanitation workers. Emptiers, such as members of the Twikatane Environmental Services, began receiving more customers and gained access to skills development training and safety equipment. Furthermore, an agreement was brokered between the emptiers and LgWSSC to ensure a more predictable income for the former. When emptiers meet their key performance targets, they become entitled to receive fixed monthly payments.

According to Trasford Katala, an emptier from Twikatane Environmental Services, "Now we work with the trust that we will receive compensation at the end of the month to help support our families."

Combined with efforts by the WASH regulator NWASCO to finalise the statutory instruments and code of practice for on-site sanitation and faecal sludge management, the future of the country's emptiers and their access to decent work is becoming brighter.

SCHEDULED DESLUDGING AS A CLIMATE ADAPTATION STRATEGY

"Scheduled emptying is a climate response and one of many adaptation strategies to prevent human waste from polluting groundwater, especially in flood-prone areas," says Maria Carreiro, from SNV in Zambia. **Groundbreaking research in Uganda revealed that as much as half of greenhouse gas emissions in urban settings can be derived from sanitation, due to long periods of stored human waste, particularly in anaerobic tanks. Enabling periodic and shorter emptying intervals can play a role in climate change mitigation efforts. In terms of climate adaptation, the benefits associated with pretimed emptying in flood-prone areas include decreased illegal dumping of human waste and incidences of toilet contents overflowing into the living environment.**

“ Within six months, 92% of Kamushanga's population subscribed to the service”



pathway 3

Strengthening

WASH

governance

Without enabling governments and a strong WASH governance, there will be no efficient and effective delivery of inclusive and sustainable WASH services. This starts with governments being held accountable and recognising they are duty bearers of the right to water and sanitation.

In the following section you will find examples of how the WASH SDG programme worked on transparent and inclusive planning, monitoring and reporting of results and budgets by local governments.

WASH committees in Bangladesh achieve impressive results

More money and more confidence

More budget to a new road or to safe water facilities? WASH SDG ensures that citizens know the importance of the latter and can use their voice to advocate for inclusive WASH. The WAI partners, led by Simavi, provided training sessions and guidance to water and sanitation committees in Bangladesh, building their confidence to urge their local government to prioritise safe water and sanitation in their budgets.

by Alok Kumar Majumder

Safe drinking water and good sanitation costs money. A lot of money. Especially in a country like Bangladesh, where 21% of the population still has no access to safe drinking water and 51% has no access to a decent toilet. Financial support from foreign governments and development organisations can contribute a little, but the biggest responsibility lies with central and local governments.

More funds for water and sanitation

While the budget for water and sanitation in Bangladesh has doubled since 2019, this is not nearly enough. Calculations show that much more is still needed to meet the development goal of water and sanitation for all in Bangladesh by 2030. This means that local governments in particular need to give greater priority

People observing the WASH budget,
Ayalapatakata © Simavi

to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). And especially to communities and groups that are most disadvantaged and often have the least access to WASH.

But how do you ensure a larger share of the budget will be invested in much needed WASH facilities? The answer: public participation. Especially by women and girls, for whom lack of access to water and sanitation is often a major problem. In Bangladesh, all budget discussions are public and governments are obligated to show how the money is spent. This is called the open budget process, something that was introduced in 2006 but is still far from taking off everywhere.

Strengthening WASH committees

To increase the effectiveness and accountability of the open budget process, Simavi and partners have focused within the Bangladesh WASH SDG sub-programme on making the communal water and sanitation committees, stronger. For example, by providing training and guidance and ensuring that women are given a more important role within these committees.

This enables the WASH committees to make well-founded requests during local budget discussions for more and improved targeted WASH investments, for example for building toilets for girls at schools, and better maintenance for sanitation services and water facilities. This committee also monitors the implementation and how much of the budget benefits people who are often overlooked – women and girls, the elderly, people with disabilities and people with low social status or low income.

Growth of hundreds of percent

The results are impressive. In the three municipalities (Satkhira, Kalaroa and Barguna) the budget allocated to water, sanitation and hygiene has increased by several hundred percent since the 2018/2019 financial year. In Satkhira, the budget increased from EUR 260,960 to 1,524,991 in the 2022/2023 financial year. In Kalaroa, it went from EUR 27,862 to 500,590 and in Barguna from EUR 54,794 to 664,960.

Tax revenue

While the budget increased, so did residents' confidence in their local government. With the open budget process, people can see what happens with the budget and how it reaches the people who need it the most. "In four years, tax revenue in my community has tripled," observes Abdul Kuddus Alo Akand, chairman of the Barguna Sadar Union Parishad. And that

money and trust is important to ensure that changes are not temporary, and sustainable change can be made.

WASH PLANS IN NEPAL

Increasing the allocated WASH budget was also one of the strategies of the WAI sub-programme in Nepal. While WAI Bangladesh focused on open budgeting, WAI Nepal worked on the increase of local government budgets through WASH plans. Both rely on civil society participation, access to information and government responsibility. The process of preparing the WASH plan is highly participatory and adopts a bottom-up approach. All necessary information and data are gathered from the grassroots level, and sharing analyses and cost estimations are carried out with all the stakeholders involved. These projects are then prioritised for investment from various sectors based on participatory planning. The WASH plan is developed with the intention to leave no one behind approach and places the needs of socially excluded people, women and girls at the core of the plan. This strategy has paid off – at the end of the programme, the local government budget for WASH had increased by 112%.

“ In four years, tax revenue in my community has tripled ”



Read more about the best practices and approaches from the WASH SDG WAI sub-programme in Bangladesh [here](#).



Female leadership in policy development and implementation

Women drive sanitation improvements in Indonesia

Meet ARSETI and safely managed sanitation promoter, Sudarsih
© SNV

In two cities within Indonesia's Lampung province, female leaders are driving change by mobilising communities to pay for regular household toilet-emptying services, and ensuring stakeholder accountability for WASH conditions in health care facilities.

By Saniya Niska and Annisa Pramesti Putri

ARSETI scales wide

While the majority of households in Metro City, with its population of 170,000, have access to toilets, not all of them were managed safely. For a significant number of people in the city, the cost of desludging services was considered expensive. ARSETI – a rotating group savings mechanism introduced by the local government, promised to make these services

more affordable. Unfortunately, it struggled to gain widespread adoption. Few people knew about ARSETI prompting the Mayor to seek the support of various groups – including women's groups – to raise awareness about the savings scheme. Sudarsih, a member of a women's group and community health worker in Rejomulyo village played a key role in this.

Sudarsih invited her neighbours to join an ARSETI group. She carefully explained the mechanics of the group savings scheme, emphasising that each contributing household member would take turns withdrawing from the collected money to pay for a desludging service. She highlighted the EUR 2 monthly savings that participating households would gain. Through her efforts and those of other women's groups, the number of ARSETI savings groups expanded to 118 in Metro City.

118 ARSETI groups formed and counting: safely managed sanitation is now a reality for more people

WASH in health care facilities

Another exemplary leadership example comes from SNV's CSO partner, Yayasan Konservasi Way Seputih (YKWS). YKWS, an SNV partner since 2017, gained the opportunity to strengthen their skills in advocacy, programme development, and financial management through the WASH SDG programme.

Led by Executive Director Febrilia Ekawati, YKWS utilised their strengthened capacities to improve WASH conditions in primary health centres (PHCs). Their mission, driven by a 2018 baseline survey revealing limited WASH access in 80% of health care facilities, aimed

to reform facility WASH governance with concrete regulation, earmarked funds, and accountability mechanisms.

In 2020, YKWS and SNV developed a social accountability approach for WASH in health care facilities. This approach defined, with greater clarity, the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in ensuring the sustainability and accessibility in public health care facilities. The approach was introduced by YKWS alongside their roll-out of WHO-UNICEF's WASH FIT monitoring tool.

As a result of the efforts of the YKWS team, several WASH FIT working groups (also known as stakeholder forums) were established in nine PHCs across two cities. All working groups were endorsed by their respective government authorities, namely, the Metro City local government and the Health Office in Bandar Lampung. Going beyond endorsement, the Metro City local government allocated budgets to replicate the social accountability and WASH FIT models in the seven remaining PHCs, and further increase allocation for health care. Meanwhile, in Bandar Lampung City, the local government has also stated their commitment to further replicate WASH FIT, requesting health centres to revisit their budgets and business plans for 2023 to include an allocation for WASH improvements.

Pushing the envelope

For leaders like Sudarsih and Febrilia, their initial success only encouraged them to aim higher and seek more creative ways to realise

greater impact.

Beyond activating ARSETI groups, Sudarsih participated in the WASH SDG programme's mason training workshop, equipping herself with the skills to advise on proper containments and communicate groundwater contamination concerns.

Febrilia and her team engaged mass media to document important WASH-related milestones in PHCs. Through partnerships with the media, visible improvements, such as greater WASH facility accessibility for people with disabilities and children, garnered interest among residents, including the Mayor of Metro City.

MORE ABOUT THE IMPACT WOMEN ARE MAKING

Read UN Indonesia's feature story on WASH in health care facility progress in the Lampung Province

Learn more about ARSETI from this video

Learn about ongoing WASH in health care facilities efforts



How strong political will in Shinyanga transforms lives

Faecal Sludge Treatment plant built by WASH SDG project in Shinyanga © SNV

Award-winning sanitation leadership in Tanzania

Children playing in open fields full of faecal sludge was a common sight in the Shinyanga municipality until a few years ago. Thanks to strong leadership and better cooperation between the municipal council and the water and sanitation utility, significant changes have occurred. Today, Shinyanga stands out as the highest-performing municipality in sanitation across Tanzania.

By Olivier Germain and Leyla Khalifa

“Before the year 2020–2021, the Shinyanga Municipal Council did not have a designated place for wastewater disposal,” explains Kuchibanda Kizito, Head of the Sanitation and Waste Management Unit at Shinyanga Municipal Council. “Children from the surrounding village would come and play there.” Some farmers even paid to have untreated sludge emptied directly onto their fields to grow their crops. The city’s opening of its first faecal sludge treatment plant (FSTP), developed in partnership with SNV, brought major improvements in redressing unsanitary and unhygienic practices.

But, behind the rise of the FSTP is a carefully designed collaborative and consultative process that introduced inclusive sanitation systems and facilities fit for years to come. This is why Shinyanga’s success is inspiring other municipalities across Tanzania.

Deciding to collaborate

In the past, the municipality focused mainly on solid waste management, while the Shinyanga Water Supply and Sanitation Authority (SHUWASA) focused on clean water supply. “Eventually, we decided to collaborate,” explains Angel Mwaipopo, Customer Service Manager at SHUWASA. “We engaged in multiple training sessions and came together as a cohesive unit, with the support of SNV.”

Driven by the findings of a baseline study on sanitation services and hygiene practices in Shinyanga conducted under the WASH SDG programme in 2018, SNV supported the coming together of the council and the utility. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was developed, clarifying the roles and responsibilities of each to improve sanitation, and establishing a joint planning platform for decision-making.

“Sanitation issues are not only the health sector’s responsibility. It should be a concern for every citizen,” says Jomaary Satura, Director of Shinyanga Municipal Council. Training staff and

community members has been an important part of the success story. Satura adds, "A significant amount of education has been provided to both our professionals and the community, including social groups, regarding the construction and proper use of safe toilet facilities."

Improving work conditions

Strong leadership from both organisations has not only driven the sanitation agenda but also galvanised support to examine and improve the work conditions of emptiers. Watu Kazi, the region's first manual emptier group, can now access better equipment, professional training,

WORKING ON LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY

Crafting local and national government stakeholders' roles and responsibilities, both during and after programme activities, is an important part of the WASH SDG programme. A sustainability clause, compacts, and checks were included in the programme to ensure that focus and attention remained on long-term sustainability. In the case of Shinyanga, local authorities signed a 10-year commitment to maintain water facilities and services, engage in regular monitoring, and respond to challenges or take corrective measures.

and protective gear, keeping them safe on the job.

Iddy Saidi Makalanga, emptier and member of Watu Kazi, is now a proud worker, "The equipment has helped us a lot because we were working in a dangerous environment in the past, but now we are working safely. This job has improved my life. I can take care of my parents and provide a better education for my children."

Shifting revenue

More land was allocated for trenches to accommodate industrial wastewater and support the FSTP. Revenue, which was largely generated through tipping (dumping) fees, once collected by the municipality, has since been transferred to the utility. Any discussion and decision involving revenue collection is notoriously difficult, but the directors of SHUWASA and the municipal council's understanding of the longer-term and more positive impacts of this shift made this possible. In just a matter of years, the impacts of joint leadership were felt and visible, winning Shinyanga the award for the highest-performing municipality in sanitation. On the back of this, the water authority secured a EUR 76 million loan, which will help upscale its sanitation and hygiene work in the district and beyond. Together, the council and the utility are committed to ensuring safely managed city-wide sanitation for years to come.

Kuchibanda Kizito, receives the 2022 Highest Performing Municipality for Sanitation Award on behalf of Shinyanga
© SNV



Explore the change in Shinyanga? Watch this video here.



Recommendations

Working towards systems change

Service delivery alone won't secure water and sanitation for everybody. Programmes employing a systems approach, such as WASH SDG, integrate the demand for WASH facilities with enhanced service provision, all bolstered by effective sector governance at the sub-national level. Together, these efforts hold the potential to attain the SDG6 goals. **Five insights to take forward.**



1

MAKE CHANGE SUSTAINABLE

Sustainability should be the starting point of any programme. An important element of sustainability is ownership, both by communities and governments. By means of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), WASH SDG partners were able to take the lead in programme implementation during the initial phase, while in the second phase, governments assumed a leading role. This transition allowed governments to incorporate the insights and knowledge acquired through the programme into their own implementation efforts. To ensure targets are set and maintained, the reform process should be government-led. The willingness to reform and strengthen current systems by governments should be present to turn WASH services durable. WASH programmes have the crucial duty to support governments and simultaneously create accountability mechanisms in their approach to providing sustainable WASH services.

2

LEAVE NO-ONE BEHIND

A WASH programme is only as good as the inclusivity of its impact. Women and girls and other socially excluded groups often struggle to benefit from WASH services and the programming that aims to increase this access. There is a risk of exacerbating inequality in WASH programmes if there is no constant and conscious emphasis to challenge exclusionary practices. Therefore, programmes need to have inclusion-specific outcomes that force us to monitor and evaluate the progress made for marginalised groups.

To start this process, understanding the baseline and targets around women and girls, and other socially excluded groups is key. Collecting disaggregated data will provide the information necessary to identify and address inequalities and track those during the programme. Also, invest in staff awareness-raising on a personal and team-building level. WASH SDG used GESI as a specific learning trajectory and the constant sharing of learnings created a situation in which many sub-programmes adapted their activities to incorporate the best strategies and key learnings.

3

ENSURE THE TIME SPAN IS RIGHT

Sustainable WASH services should outlive the programmes implemented. Strengthening WASH systems takes time and often accelerates exponentially when the right actors have been reached, behaviour change has 'settled' and the different strategies and interventions come together. However, programmes such as WASH SDG, have an approximate 5-year life span. To fully utilise the opportunities present and achieve a systemic change that lasts, programmes should ideally span a minimum of 10 years. When a programme is shorter than that, untapped potential is wasted, and the risk of regression increases.



4

MEASURE LONG-TERM GAINS

In order to measure a systems approach and the sustainability of improved WASH services and demand for these services, indicators that measure beneficiary numbers do not suffice. Merely access to basic WASH services does not assess the sustainability of the system in place or the demand from the community. Using outcomes that measure systems strengthening ensures that a programme can focus on sustainable results. WASH SDG has developed tools that measure outcomes that focus on systems strengthening. This includes the sustainability checks but also indicators that measure levels of participation: are women and socially excluded groups present during decision-making and are they able to influence WASH-related decisions in the longer term?

5

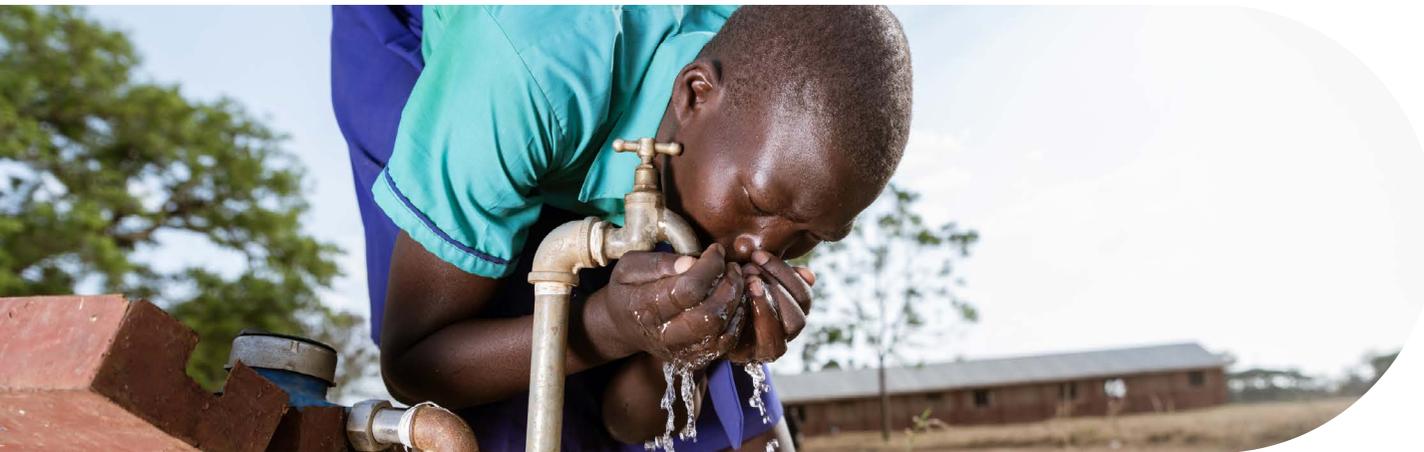
WORK TOGETHER

Consortium level synergies and partnerships – such as those exemplified in the WASH SDG programme – continue to be crucial to realise the SDGs. Consortiums or other forms of partnerships have greater combined reach and implementation capacity which, in turn, increases their impact. Through high-quality coordination, clear communication, role definition and investing in partner relationships, consortiums can reach greater levels of change and can support each other through building on each other's strengths. During WASH SDG, partners could tap into different expertise ranging from urban to local, from sanitation to water and from gender expertise to climate expertise. Making it easier to provide an all-round programme that will have lasting effects.

THE END OF A JOURNEY

WASH SDG has been a journey. Applying a systems approach within the limitations of the programme and the obstacles encountered has enabled us to constantly learn and adapt. The importance of inclusion and sustainability cannot be emphasised enough. The learnings and recommendations of the WASH SDG Consortium are a crucial contribution to creating equitable WASH systems for all.

May these
recommendations
be taken to heart
**to create equitable
WASH systems for all.**



As the WASH SDG consortium partners (Plan, SNV and the WASH Alliance International – consisting of Amref Flying Doctors, Akvo, Aidenvironment (RAIN team), IRC, Practica Foundation, RUAF/Hivos, WASTE and Wetlands International, and lead by Simavi), including our consortium offices in-country, we would like to extend our special thanks to our in-country partners:

BANGLADESH

Local NGOs/CSOs:

Development Organisation of the Rural Poor, Hope for the Poorest, Practical Action, Stichting Landontwikkelings Project Bangladesh, Uttaran, WaterAid Bangladesh. Two local NGOs IDEA and DALIT are involved as sub-contract partner.

Local/national authorities:

Union Parisad of: Dhailua, Barguna Sadar, Agardari, Aylapatakata, Burirchar, M Baliatali, Balli, Jhaudanga, Badarkhali, Gaurichanna, Phuljhuri, Naltona, Keorabunia, Hosnabad, Jalalpur, Khalishakhali, Nagarhata, 3 tea gardens (Rajghat, Satgaon, Kalighat Unions) and Municipalities (Pourashava) Barguna, Satkhira, Amtali, Patharghata, Betagi, Kalaroa, Kalapara, Jessore Paurashava, Benapole Paurashava, Gazipur City Corporation

ETHIOPIA

Local NGOs/CSOs:

Bole Bible Baptist Church (BBBC)
Local/national authorities:
Amhara and Oromia Regional Bureau WASH sector signatories, Negelle Arsi and Shashemene districts WASH Sector Offices of Oromia region, Bahir Dar Zuria and Lasta districts WASH sector offices of Amhara region and Rift Valley Lakes Basin Development Office. Bahir Dar Zurija district WASH sector offices, Lasta district WASH sector offices

Local business/MFI:

Oromia Credit and Saving SC (OCSSCO)

INDONESIA

Local NGOs/CSOs:

NTB province: Yayasan Transform and LIDI (Lombok Disability Independent Indonesia) Foundation, NTT province: Yayasan Pijar Timur Indonesia, Persani (DPO), Kumpesa Rai Belu (DPO) and Persama (DPO), CBM Indonesia, Mitra Bentala, YKWS,

Youth with Sanitation Concern

Local/national authorities:

Mataram City government, Central Lombok District Government, Malaka District Government, Belu District Government, Jejaring AMPL (National WASH Network), Provincial government Lampung Province, Provincial government West Java, Local governments Bandar Lampung, Metro, Tasikmalaya

NEPAL

Local NGOs/CSOs:

Relief Nepal, Community For Social Development Center, ENPHO, Lumanti, CIUD, Sahakarmi Samaj, Geruwa, NFCC, Biogas Sector Partnership (BSP), Friends Service Council Nepal (FSCN) and Biruwa.

Local/national authorities:

Municipalities of Sunsari district: Barakhshetra, Dharan, Gadi, Duhabi, Inaruwa, Ramdhuni; Barju rural municipality, Municipalities of Sinduli district: Kamalamai,

Marin, Tinpatane, Dudhauwali, Sunkoshi, Birendranagar municipality (Surkhet district, province 6), Chandannath municipality (Jumla district, province 6), Nepalgunj sub-metropolitan city (Banke district, province 5), Khadak municipality (Saptari district, province 2), : Baijanath Rural Municipality, Barahatal Rural Municipality, Kohalpur Municipality and Bheriganga Municipality.

Local public/private businesses/ MFI:

Federation of Drinking Water and Sanitation Users Nepal (FEDWASUN), Water sanitation and hygiene user committees

TANZANIA

Local/national authorities:

Arusha city council, Arusha Urban Water and Sanitation Authority, Shinyanga municipal council, Shinyanga Water and Sanitation Authority,

Other institutions:

Nelson Mandela African Institution

of Science and Technology – WISE – Future, African Centre of Excellence

UGANDA

Local NGOs/CSOs:

AFSRT, HEWASA, JESE, NETWAS-Uganda, WASEU, UWASNET

Local/national authorities:

Agago district local government, Nebbi district local government, Kamuli district local government, Buyende district local government

ZAMBIA

Local/national authorities:

Kasama municipal council, Mbala municipal council, Mpulungu municipal council, Nakonde municipal council, Kabwe municipal council, Chongwe municipal council, Kafue town council

Other institutions:

Chambesi Water and Sewerage Company, Lukanga Water and Sewerage Company

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