



WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE: BUILDING BLOCKS FOR MATERNAL AND CHILD SURVIVAL

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Clean water, sanitation, and hygienic practices are cornerstones for good health. Improving water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) can prevent infection and stop the spread of waterborne diseases such as cholera and diarrhea – major drivers of illness and death for mothers and children. This makes WASH interventions central to USAID's investments to strengthen child and maternal survival.

Globally, 2.6 million children died between one month and five years of age in 2022 – largely from preventable causes such as diarrhea and pneumonia. Expanding access to safe and sustainable drinking water, sanitation services, and hygienic practices can reduce these preventable deaths. Through WASH programming, USAID supports partner countries to make progress toward the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals for ending preventable newborn, child, and maternal deaths – and achieving access to water and sanitation for all.



SINCE 2008, USAID
HAS HELPED
70 MILLION PEOPLE
GAIN ACCESS
TO SUSTAINABLE
DRINKING WATER
SERVICES AND
55 MILLION PEOPLE
GAIN ACCESS
TO SUSTAINABLE
SANITATION SERVICES.



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

PRIORITIZING ACCESS AND EQUITY

USAID recognizes that WASH services are the foundation of quality, equitable, and respectful health programs. In homes, safe drinking water, access to latrines, and handwashing stations are paramount to stop the spread of diseases like cholera, diarrhea, and pneumonia that can be life threatening for pregnant women, infants, and children. In health care facilities, access to safe water and sanitation, handwashing, and protocols for cleanliness reduce the risk of infections, including during childbirth and immediately postpartum, reducing illness and increasing survival.

Improving equity in access to WASH services is vital to improve health outcomes, especially for women and children. It is often the most vulnerable, remote, or marginalized populations that lack access to safe drinking water and sanitation. Our programs use inclusive approaches and look to local leaders to shape and lead activities, helping to ensure they will continue to deliver benefits into the future.

DELIVERING GLOBAL LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATION TO INCREASE COVERAGE AND QUALITY

USAID is leading the charge on new ways of thinking for WASH programming to benefit women and children. Through research, we continue to bring innovations to our work, such as shifting to area-wide approaches that seek to move entire communities toward universal and sustained access to water and sanitation.

Our programs promote a higher standard of water and sanitation services. Moving beyond access to basic services, we now aspire to safely managed, sustainable services. In partnership with local leaders and private sector partners, our programs support the expansion of WASH systems, financing, and management that will sustain services over time. USAID's global leadership to continually adapt and improve programs translates to better coverage and quality of the WASH services that save lives.

Through USAID's engagement in global partnerships such as the [Global Task Force for WASH in Health Care Facilities](#); the area-wide sanitation community of practice; support for the [Joint Monitoring Programme](#); and the [Global Analysis and Assessment for Sanitation and Drinking Water](#); our programs monitor progress and mobilize action for WASH for women and children in coordination with global efforts.

INVESTING IN ESSENTIAL SERVICES AND PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

WASH is essential for effective service delivery for primary health care throughout the global health system. The facilities delivering the most primary health care are often the ones with the poorest WASH conditions – roughly half of all facilities in low- and middle-income countries lack even basic water and sanitation services.

Poor WASH conditions in primary health care facilities expose pregnant women and newborns to illness and infection, discourage families from seeking care, and force health workers to deliver services in unsafe and unpleasant working environments. Strengthening the quality of primary health care by investing in WASH is critical to infection prevention and control. This requires building the infrastructure for WASH services, but also investing in the ongoing management, operations, and supplies to maintain facilities. Such improvements create a culture of hygiene to support maternal and child survival through primary health care services for pregnancy, delivery, newborn health, child health, and immunization – care that saves lives.



IN 2022 ALONE, USAID HELPED **5.2 MILLION PEOPLE GAIN ACCESS TO SUSTAINABLE DRINKING WATER SERVICES**, MORE THAN HALF OF WHOM WERE WOMEN AND CHILDREN.



HALF OF ALL HEALTHCARE FACILITIES LACK BASIC ACCESS TO WATER AND SANITATION. **DELIVERING EFFECTIVE PRIMARY HEALTH CARE FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN MEANS INVESTING IN WATER AND SANITATION** FACILITIES TO ENSURE SAFETY, PRIVACY, AND DIGNITY IN ALL ASPECTS OF CARE.



IN 2022, USAID HELPED **3.6 MILLION PEOPLE GAIN ACCESS TO SUSTAINABLE SANITATION SERVICES** FOR THE FIRST TIME.