



Improving Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene in Southwest Bangladesh

WASHplus in Bangladesh

WASHplus received USAID field support (\$4 million to date, \$6 million projected over three years) to improve water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) in southwestern Bangladesh. This support aims to:

- ➔ **Increase access** to sustainable safe WASH solutions in marginal and geographically challenging districts, including increased access to water to reduce burden on women and girls, improved sanitation that considers women's privacy and safety, and menstrual hygiene management in home and school.
- ➔ **Build community and local government capacity** to operate and maintain water and sanitation facilities and demand increased allocation and pro-poor targeting of national and local government funds and community contributions to ensure sustainability of project interventions and impact.
- ➔ **Strengthen coordinated WASH-nutrition programming** in support of broader Feed the Future objectives. For this last objective, WASHplus will work in collaboration with other USAID implementing partners like SPRING and SHIKHA (a USAID-funded follow on to Alive & Thrive) to integrate hand washing before food preparation and feeding, food safety, and safe disposal of infant feces into more traditional nutrition and livelihood activities.

Project Activities, Partners, Objectives

Activities will focus in four *upazillas* in southwest Bangladesh, Char Fasson, Daulatkhan, Galachipa, and Kalapara. These upazillas coincide with Feed the Future intervention areas.



Access to appropriate and, most importantly, gender-sensitive WASH facilities would have a significant positive impact on both the daily lives and long-term prospects of millions of women and girls currently living without them.¹

WaterAid, a WASHplus resource partner, serves as the prime implementing partner for this activity. WASHplus has contracted with four established NGOs as local partners— Dhaka Ahsania Mission, South Asia Partnership Bangladesh, Association of Voluntary Action for Society and Development Organization for the Rural Poor.

To achieve project objectives, WASHplus addresses the challenging environment of the Southwest with approaches that defy simple sanitation solutions. This requires innovation and collaboration with a range of technical and community partners from the private, government, and civil society sectors—all working toward the goal of a feces-free environment. To improve safe water access where salinity affects water quality, WASHplus implements or rehabilitates appropriate and reliable water technologies to location-specific geophysical and hydrogeological conditions. To promote improved sanitation, the project supports local partners as they implement the community-led total sanitation approach to “trigger” communities to construct household latrines and hand washing stations. At the same time WASHplus supports coordinated efforts of small private sector entrepreneurs to supply the needed technologies to consumers who can afford to buy and/or finance sanitation improvements.

Evidence-Based and Small Doable Actions Approaches

WASHplus focuses on the interrelated role of hardware, software, and enabling environment to ensure improved and sustained WASH practice. WASHplus brings global and country-level experience in applying evidence-based approaches, beyond hardware coverage, to ensure consistent and correct practice of hand washing, safe feces disposal, and safe water from “source to mouth,” thus realizing the desired health and other socio-economic objectives associated with improved WASH. One of its major approaches to behavior change builds on the concept of the sanitation ladder to identify a series of small doable actions, feasible yet effective actions applicable to the resource-constrained context. These small doables are negotiated with householders to move them from current practice toward the ideal.

Sustained WASH gains require a capable and engaged local government working within communities to each do their part in establishing and maintaining systems.

In order for women and girls to live healthy, productive, and dignified lives, it is essential that they are able to manage menstrual bleeding effectively. This requires access to appropriate water, sanitation and hygiene services.²

WASHplus will strengthen and support local governments to this end.

In addition to the three project objectives stated above, WASHplus plans to work with a “coalition of the willing”— all stakeholders interested in exploring the viability of bringing a commercial hand washing station to the Bangladesh market. Fixed hand washing stations at the point of use are closely linked with consistent and

correct hand washing at key times, and other South Asian countries have identified the demand for simple, yet aspirational, devices that facilitate washing.

¹ WSSCC. <http://www.wsscc.org/topics/crosscutting-themes/gender-and-wash%E2%80%8B>

² Mahon T. and M. Fernandes. 2010. Menstrual Hygiene in South Asia: A Neglected Issue for WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) Programmes. London: WaterAid.



The USAID WASHplus project supports healthy households and communities by creating and delivering interventions that lead to improvements in WASH and indoor air pollution (IAP). This five-year project (2010-2015), funded through USAID’s Bureau for Global Health and led by FHI 360 in partnership with CARE and Winrock International, uses at-scale programming approaches to reduce diarrheal diseases and acute respiratory infections, the two top killers of children under age five globally. WASHplus works both globally and in six countries worldwide.

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