

Growing communities



Esther Lucius, Malawi, explains how she is able to grow more vegetables for her family to eat and sell now that her village has a safe, reliable water source.

“Since we had the water the production of vegetables is a bit more. We grow vegetables that we weren’t able to grow before. Paprika, onions, pumpkins, leaves and other things. We used to grow vegetables by the river and when the rainy season came they were washed away. Some of the vegetables are for selling, some are for eating. We grow cassava; a lot of this is sold to support the family. This is our main source of income.”

Top of the class



Sabina, 15, in Nepal remembers how before our partners helped her school build new latrines she and her friends would stay home rather than risk being seen going to the toilet in the open.

“Before the school had latrines we used to go to the bush where there were bamboo plants – we used to hide under the bamboo to go to the loo. During menstruation we didn’t have anywhere to go and change our pads and it was really difficult, and also when we had diarrhoea it was hard too. So we wouldn’t come to school then and used to go absent and stay at home instead. Now we don’t need to miss our classes and we feel healthier than before.”

Small change, big difference



Our partners worked with community members in Asamponbisi village, Ghana, to construct a safe water point. Azarma Akaraba helped build the new well and describes the difference the project has made to local women.

“There are many changes for women now in my village. When the water was far away, we used to get up very early and never got enough sleep. Now we can sleep normally, collect water, do all our chores and do basket weaving to earn some money. Also, we no longer have chest problems from carrying the water so far. I am happy now that we are healthy and life is better.”

Wider impacts



Improved access to safe water, hygiene and sanitation transforms the lives of the world’s poorest people by bringing far-reaching changes not only to health but education and livelihoods too.

When people are healthier and freed from the burden of having to collect water or find a safe place to go to the toilet they have more time for education, employment and social and family life.



WaterAid transforms lives by improving access to safe water, hygiene and sanitation in the world’s poorest communities.



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Freed from the drudgery of collecting water Ayene and Mbinge weave baskets to sell in Asamponbisi village, Ghana. Read more about their village on the back page.

Safe water, improved hygiene and sanitation are essential for people's health, livelihoods and opportunities. With these basic human rights, people have the time and energy to gain skills and work towards a brighter future.

Health

Diarrhoeal diseases caused by unsafe water and poor sanitation kill 1.4 million children a year. Clean water sources, safe disposal of human waste and good hygienic practices dramatically reduce incidences of these diseases and others like trachoma, which causes blindness, and scabies. Good sewerage and drainage also stops the build-up of stagnant water, removing breeding grounds for malaria-carrying mosquitoes.

Healthy people are more productive and have more time to work towards a future free from poverty.

Education

Without safe water close to home many children are prevented from gaining an education because they must collect water for their families. This water is often unsafe and causes illnesses which can keep children away from school, either because they are caring for other family members or because they are sick themselves.

Girls in particular are likely to miss school as they are primarily the ones expected to perform domestic tasks. Those that do go to school often drop out when they reach puberty if there are no sanitation facilities.

Our partners' school sanitation and water projects clean up school environments, provide separate toilet facilities and ensure a source of safe water. Diseases are reduced, children are better hydrated and schools find it easier to attract and retain teachers.

Farming and nutrition

With access to water and sanitation facilities close to home people have more time in the day to farm and prepare meals for their families. Communities are able to grow more varied crops in greater quantities, which provide a balanced diet and much needed extra income as excess crops can be sold.

With more food families can eat regular meals and when children are no longer suffering from diarrhoeal diseases they are better able to absorb nutrients.



Kenedy Gondwe in Chikompulazi village, Malawi, adds fertiliser from his composting latrine to his crops.

Some water and sanitation facilities specifically benefit farming, such as composting latrines, which turn human waste into a renewable source of free fertiliser, and water points where waste water is stored to use on crops or for animals.

Household income

Diseases caused by unsafe water and poor sanitation prevent people from working, while medical bills and transport to local clinics consume more of a family's time and income.

In urban communities with no access to safe water, people often have to buy water from vendors at inflated prices. In Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, the poorest people spend on average 10% of their income buying water at a higher price per litre than those who can afford piped connections to their homes.

Family life

Having safe water and sanitation close to home gives people more time to spend with their families. Women we work with tell us that they no longer have to worry about finding water and are better able to ensure the health of their family as they can provide clean water and regular meals.

Our projects always include the promotion of good hygiene practices such as handwashing after going to the toilet and the safe disposal of faeces. This knowledge, combined with a safe, hygienic place to go to the toilet, enables people to create a family environment to be proud of.



Valy Adeline is pictured outside her school's new latrine block in Madagascar.

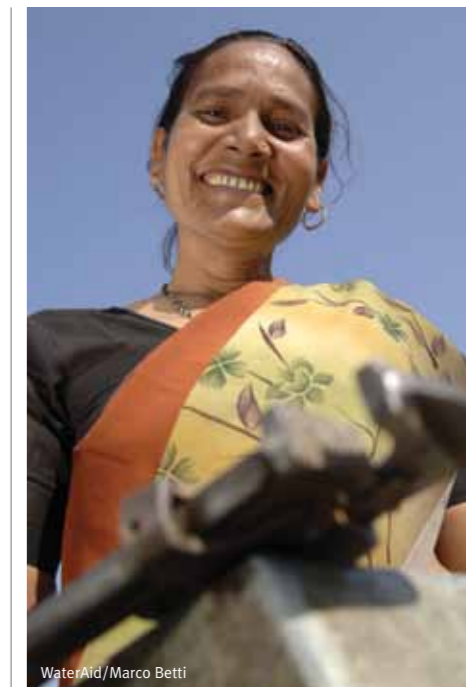
Empowering women

We and our partners ensure that women are involved in all stages of our projects, from the planning to the building and management of schemes. This is because women and girls often benefit most from water and sanitation projects.

Women's health and productivity improves when they do not have to wake up early to walk for water or carry heavy containers over several miles. With safe, hygienic latrines women are spared the indignity of going to the toilet in the open. They no longer have to wait until nightfall to find some privacy and so the risk of being attacked is reduced.

Building skills

Being involved in one of our partner's projects often gives people the chance to learn new skills or take on a respected role in their community, such as the treasurer of a water and sanitation committee. We ensure the whole community is involved so that marginalised groups have the opportunity to raise their social status.



Sheela Singh is a handpump mechanic in Mahoba district, India. She received tools and training so that she can support the local community.

Wider impacts: the facts

- For every **\$1** invested in water and sanitation, **\$8** is returned in increased productivity.
- Lack of safe water and sanitation costs sub-Saharan Africa around **5%** of its Gross Domestic Product each year.
- **443 million** school days are lost each year due to water-related diseases.
- **11%** more girls attend school when sanitation is available.
- Households in rural Africa spend on average **26%** of their time fetching water, and it is generally women who are burdened with the task.