



Autumn 2020

Oasis

Your WaterAid magazine



Highlights

- COVID-19 Global Response
- A Day in Navy's Life: Health and sanitation when living with a disability



WaterAid

The crisis

- Two in five households globally lack handwashing facilities with soap and water
- 785 million people in the world – one in ten – do not have clean water close to home.
- Two billion people in the world – one in four – do not have a decent toilet of their own.



About WaterAid

WaterAid is an international not-for-profit, determined to make clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene normal for everyone, everywhere within a generation.

Cover photo: *Children handwashing at one of the new taps in the village of Grotu in Manufahi District, Timor-Leste.*

Credit: *WaterAid/ Tom Greenwood*

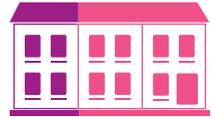
This copy of Oasis was edited and written by Tegan Dunne. For feedback or article suggestions, please email info@wateraid.org.au

Fast facts on handwashing



Only **1 in 5** (19%) people globally wash their hands with soap after using the toilet.

1 in 3 primary schools worldwide do not have handwashing facilities.



Around **310,000** children die each year from diarrheal diseases caused by dirty water and poor sanitation. That's over 800 children each day, or one child **every two minutes**.

443 million school days are lost every year because of water-related illnesses.



Handwashing with soap reduces the risk of diarrheal diseases by up to **47%**.

Lack of access to sanitation and poor hygiene contribute to approximately **88%** of childhood deaths caused by diarrheal diseases.



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From our Chief Executive

We are living in unprecedented times. In the current COVID-19 world, we must focus on handwashing and hygiene practices to keep our communities and families safe. Handwashing is vital in this crisis and we must demand action be taken on the water and hygiene struggles faced by billions of people globally.

Handwashing is one of the simplest and most effective disease prevention methods available, as we have seen from the advice in slowing the spread of COVID-19. It has been shown to reduce the incidence of pneumonia, acute respiratory infection and can help healthcare centres support a response to an outbreak like the current pandemic.

WaterAid is responding urgently to the increasing need for good hygiene in the face of COVID-19. In this issue of Oasis, you will see COVID-19 work that WaterAid is implementing globally, including Zambia, Bangladesh and Nepal, who are scaling up hygiene work, with activities including creating public handwashing stations and large-scale hygiene information campaigns.

Closer to home, WaterAid Australia is focusing on ensuring the countries we operate in are prepared and educated. You will read about our COVID-19 response work in Papua New Guinea and WaterAid's work in Cambodia, to enable good hygiene and handwashing, led by a local mother of three and grandmother of four. We'll then hear from Thida, a Cambodian engineering student supported by WaterAid, who grew up in a community lacking access to clean water and good

hygiene who wants to bring her country what she lacked as a child.

To ensure we have the ability to continue this vital work, we are also launching our COVID-19 Crisis Appeal, to help ensure we can deliver good hygiene to those who need it during this critical period, and beyond. Your donations will help us maintain our COVID-19 response activities including providing information on how to build low-cost hand wash stations and Hygiene campaigns that educate on when, where and how to wash to prevent the spread.

If everyone, everywhere had a place to wash their hands with soap and water as often as needed, it would go a long way towards helping to contain and prevent the spread of many diseases.

We need governments to take urgent action on sustainable hygiene behaviour change programmes in the long term, not just now.

It is these stories and for these reasons that WaterAid, with your support, is working to bring hygiene facilities and education, clean water and good sanitation to everyone, everywhere within a generation.

Stay safe, stay calm and we will get through this together.

A blue ink handwritten signature that reads "Rosie Wheen".

Rosie Wheen

Chief Executive
WaterAid Australia





Around the world – WaterAid’s Global COVID-19 Response

As a global organisation, WaterAid has been responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in many countries. Here are just a few ways we have been contributing to slowing the spread.

Zambia

WaterAid Zambia has been working with the Ministry of Health on COVID-19 preparedness for both prevention and response. This has involved developing social distancing stickers for use in supermarkets, banks and other public places. They have also provided mobile phones for use at the official COVID-19 call center, which was overwhelmed with calls.



Bangladesh

WaterAid Bangladesh have been responding fast to the outbreak. They are providing handwashing facilities at public places including bus and railway stations, as well as hygiene education about the ‘dos and don’ts’ of helping slow the spread of COVID-19.

Nepal

WaterAid Nepal has been creating and distributing flyers and posters in many local languages, with information on how to practice good hygiene. Their hygiene promotion campaign has also included COVID-19 information on posters across 70 bus routes, in public toilets and health care facilities. The team is also providing handwashing stations with soap for those who do not have access in their homes.





WaterAid's COVID-19 Crisis Appeal



Preventing the spread of COVID-19 requires strong and urgent action from all individuals, communities, organisations and governments.

That is why WaterAid is running its COVID-19 Crisis Appeal- we need your help.

Despite handwashing with soap helping to slow the spread of disease, including COVID-19, clean water, soap and good information on why, when and how to wash hands are not available for millions across the globe.

Frequent handwashing with soap and water is one of the key components of controlling the spread of infectious diseases, including COVID-19. However, two in five healthcare facilities globally do not have both soap and water available for doctors and nurses to wash their hands at points where care is provided. This can make disease prevention and delivering safe, quality care much more challenging.

Two in five households globally lack handwashing facilities with soap and water. With access to soap, water and good hygiene information, people are better placed to wash their hands and protect themselves and their families against COVID-19 and other diseases.

Handwashing is one of the simplest and most effective disease prevention methods available. It has been shown to reduce the incidence of acute respiratory infection by 16-23% reduce pneumonia by up to 50% and result in up to a 48% reduction in the risk of endemic diarrhoea.

Data shows that only 61% of people in Cambodia have access to handwashing facilities with both soap and water, and 29% of the population has no access to any type of handwashing facilities. In Timor-Leste, only 28% of the population has access to handwashing facilities with both soap and water. In Papua New Guinea, less than 1% of rural communities' household have handwashing facilities with soap and water.

With the need for handwashing as urgent as ever, we need to amplify the action that WaterAid has long been advocating for; safe water and good hygiene for all.

The action needed is not just infrastructure alone, it is ensuring good quality water, sanitation and hygiene service delivery and behaviour change to create strong health systems and strong communities.

As WASH experts, WaterAid is focusing on the importance of promoting clean water, sanitation and hygiene which is as critical now, as it always has been.



WaterAid's COVID-19 Response in Papua New Guinea



WaterAid/Tom Greenwood

Alford, 5 washing his hands at a tapstand with a friend in Musangun village, East Sepik province, Papua New Guinea

WaterAid has been operating in Papua New Guinea (PNG) for 16 years, and in the face of the current global pandemic COVID-19, we are working urgently and with local and national governments to scale up our hygiene work.

Washing your hands and practicing good hygiene is as critical as ever. It can help save lives and stop the spread of COVID-19, yet in PNG where WaterAid Australia operates water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programmes, less than 1% of rural communities' household have handwashing facilities with soap and water. On top of this, over 63% of the population lacks access to a basic water supply, and a staggering 81% of the population lack access to a basic hygienic

toilet. The statistics are shocking, and what is more shocking is that they are happening in a country just a one-hour flight from Australia.

This context creates an added challenge to our work. To respond to the virus,

WaterAid is using this campaign to help achieve two goals:

1. Provide COVID-19 awareness and education
2. Educate people in PNG on hand hygiene and COVID-19 prevention behaviours such as handwashing with soap, respiratory hygiene, maintaining social distancing, cleanliness and food hygiene

WaterAid is implementing a major national hygiene and COVID-19 awareness campaign in PNG. The campaign will run on billboards, print advertising, radio, television and social media to promote hygiene and COVID-19 awareness widely in the country.

WaterAid is also working with the local government in Wewak to provide information and education about how to make soap from locally available materials, as well as low-cost solutions for handwashing infrastructure, such as a tippy-tap.



Our response in PNG is a key example of why sustainable and long-term solutions are at the core of what we do.



WaterAid staff on the ground in PNG continue to tirelessly conduct direct community outreach with rural communities to spread World Health Organisation and National Department of Health awareness messaging to prepare locals for COVID-19



WaterAid/Tom Greenwood

Jonathon 8, washes his hands with help of his friend from Patrick 10 at Barakau Primary and Elementary School, Barakau, Central Province, Papua New Guinea

and dispel any myths related to the virus, providing only facts and information to ensure preparedness.

Through the exchange of information and education we can enable people to create their own sustainable and lifelong changes and help keep their families and communities safe.



Handwashing in Cambodia



Phai Chamroeun is working to ensure handwashing and hygiene is practiced in her district.

With the current outbreak of COVID-19, the facilities and education to practice good handwashing have become increasingly urgent. The crucial hygiene work WaterAid has been doing for the past 40 year is now an emergency if lives are to be saved.

In Cambodia, only 61% of people have access to handwashing facilities with both soap and water, and 29% of the population has no access to any type of handwashing facilities.

WaterAid spoke with Phai Chamroeun, a council member of Rolea B'ier district in Cambodia about her work to bring

hygiene and handwashing to her district. Phai's story highlights the challenges faced by millions around the world to practice handwashing, something that is key to reducing the spread of COVID-19 and other diseases.

“ People's awareness about washing hands with soap is low. Approximately only 20% of people wash their hands with soap. ”

"Firstly, the authority who is the specialised person has done nothing to

disseminate information about this issue [of handwashing]”.

Phai Chamroeun is a mother of three and grandmother of four and sits on the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) committee for her district, working with WaterAid to bring these health essentials to the community.

“ One of the biggest issues in her commune, and many others in Cambodia, is the lack of information and education on handwashing, and limited funding available to educate people about the importance of hygiene practices such as washing hands.

“Another key challenge is cooperation with the commune council. The commune council’s participation in the project is needed to enforce clean water use and sanitation practices as they are direct implementers. They do not realise that it is their roles to enforce clean water use and sanitation. Sometimes, they are busy and do not prioritise WASH work.”

Hygiene is not the only issue Phai’s district faces.

“Only 45% of people in the community are using latrines. Generally speaking, I think that 70% of the community area is covered by land and 20% to 25% of the community are river banks and remote areas, which are difficult to build toilets.



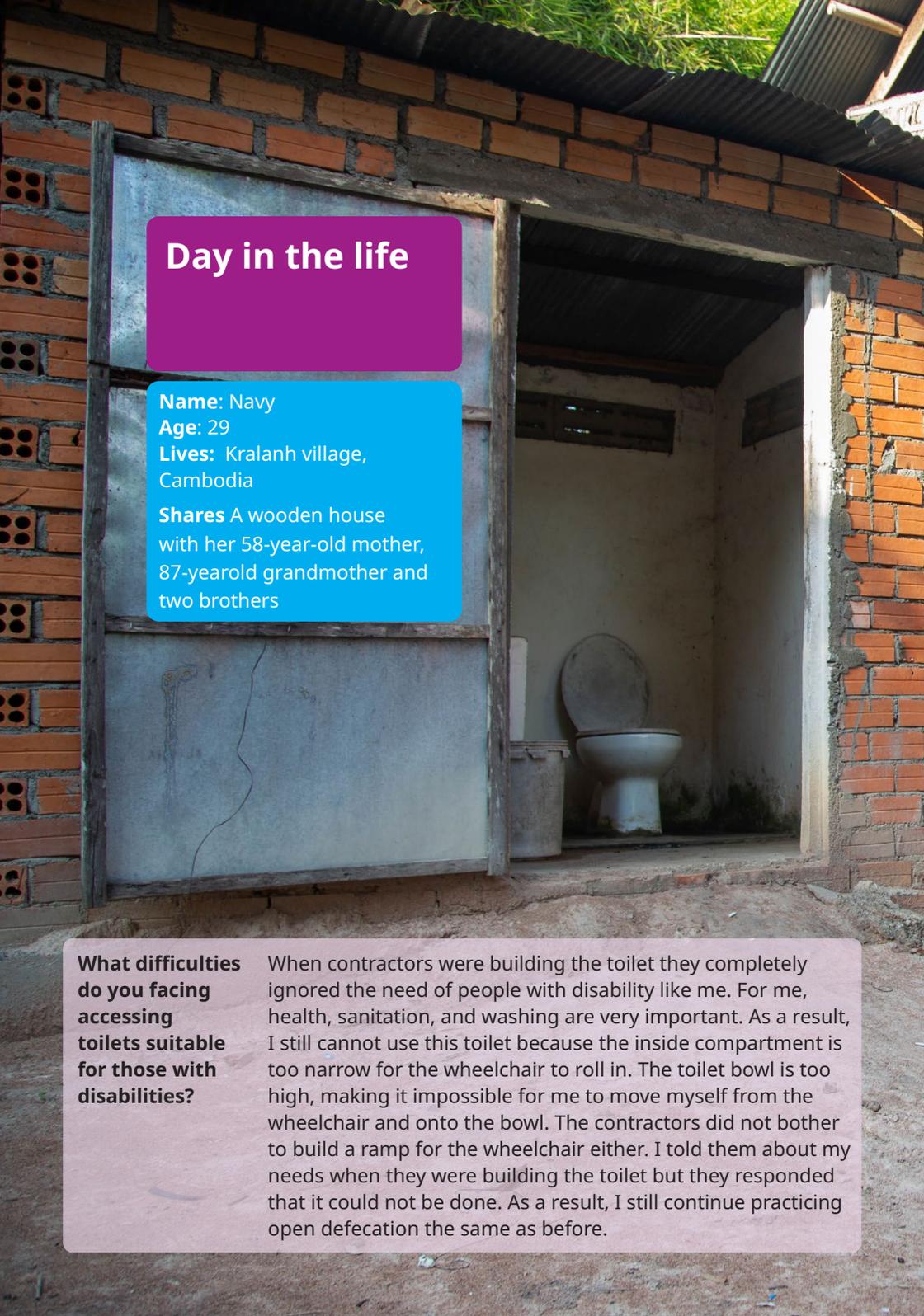
WaterAid/ Samrang Pring

Normally, people just defecate openly or in bushes as they believe that their lands are wide to do such thing. Some people are migrants, so they do not have enough time to build toilets and some are poor and need to save money for building a toilet.”

Phai works with WaterAid Cambodia on WASH activities and says before joining forces with WaterAid, she herself was not aware of the WASH issues.

This is why she is now pushing hard to make others aware about the importance of clean water, good hygiene and sanitation.

What I want to see in five or 10 years is healthy children in this district. I also want to see women feed their children well and they understand the importance of using clean water and sanitary toilets. What has motivated me and the committee is encouragement from WaterAid. It gives us motivation to educate people and pushes the commune council to join in order to raise people’s awareness on clean water.”



Day in the life

Name: Navy

Age: 29

Lives: Kralanh village,
Cambodia

Shares A wooden house
with her 58-year-old mother,
87-year-old grandmother and
two brothers

What difficulties do you face accessing toilets suitable for those with disabilities?

When contractors were building the toilet they completely ignored the need of people with disability like me. For me, health, sanitation, and washing are very important. As a result, I still cannot use this toilet because the inside compartment is too narrow for the wheelchair to roll in. The toilet bowl is too high, making it impossible for me to move myself from the wheelchair and onto the bowl. The contractors did not bother to build a ramp for the wheelchair either. I told them about my needs when they were building the toilet but they responded that it could not be done. As a result, I still continue practicing open defecation the same as before.

How does open defecation impact you?

One day it was raining heavily and my stomach could not wait any longer so I had to wheel myself out under the rain. It was so difficult to wheel on the muddy path. My wheelchair got stuck in the mud along the way. When I tried digging a hole, I splashed dirty water onto myself. That was such an unforgettable moment for me. My shoulder hurt so much from digging the hole that I felt as if one of my arms was about to break apart from my body.

How do you hope to change this?

I am presently trying to save money to build another toilet, which I hope will help significantly reduce my hardship, especially when it rains or at night time. With a proper toilet I will not have to go out to the field anymore. It is an extremely difficult experience for me. I just want to have an easily accessible toilet to use like everyone else does.





Thida is in her fourth year studying to become a water engineer in Cambodia



Thida's story

“Before the sun has risen the day starts, and it is so dark you cannot see clearly which way you are going. The walk along the muddy road to collect water must be finished in time to get to school by 7:00am.

School will be busy, cut short by the rush home to collect a second round of water for the day. The second collection is different; bright and sunny, the sweat makes it almost impossible to keep hold of the water you have just walked so far to collect. ”

This was 22-year-old Thida's life growing up as a young girl in Cambodia. In a country where one in five people don't have access to clean water, whilst unjust,

Thida's experience was not unique. Women and girls are responsible for water collection in eight out of ten households with water off premises, which presents many dangerous situations.

“The worst part about collecting water and what made me very sad as a young girl is that I had to walk through many fields and forests, and it is scary and very dangerous. Then, when I return with the water, it is still not clean and my family suffer from sickness,” said Thida.

During the night Thida tried to do homework, but sick family members suffering from diarrhoea due to dirty water need to be cared for, and her studies

suffered. Sleep would eventually come to the sick family members and Thida, before 5:00am signalled the start of another day.

“In my free time I would have liked to read more and spend time with my friends, but I was always leaving to collect water. And then when there was no water, we had to ask our neighbours for water which was hard for me and my family, because we had to live relying on others to supply us.”

Despite growing tourism, Cambodia is lacking in development in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). More than 50% of Cambodians don't have access to a decent toilet. While the country boasts large natural water resources, they are under increasing pressure due to climate change, industry and regional development

Even with planned solutions, Cambodia is severely lacking in professionals working in the WASH sector, falling more than 11,000 short of the total needed to achieve the 2030 goal.

Funded by WaterAid and motivated to ensure other children do not grow up as she did, Thida has been studying

“ The worst part about collecting water and what made me very sad as a young girl is that I had to walk through many fields and forests, and it is scary and very dangerous.

engineering at The Institution of Technology of Cambodia since 2016, and will soon graduate as a Water and Environmental Engineer.

Through programs like this, WaterAid is building Cambodia's next generation of WASH leaders and a workforce of qualified, motivated and inspired leaders and technical personnel to deliver and sustain universal access to water.

“I am studying to become an engineer because Cambodia does not have enough clean water or enough professionals in water sector to bring this clean water. We need more water professional but we also need more women in the sector. Women are the ones who collect the water and have the understanding how hard it is, so we are the ones driven to make a real difference and help other women to find easier ways to access water.”

Thida studying at school



Julian

WaterAid is thrilled to welcome Australian actor Julian Haig to the WaterAid family as an Events Ambassador! Riverdale fans will know Julian as Casino mobster Elio, but we know him as someone who has decided to help WaterAid unlock people's potential with clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene. This year, Julian signed on to take part in The Water Challenge and made water his only drink for the entire month of March.

When asked about his decision to support WaterAid, Julian said

"One of the things that really stood out to me is how close to Australia some of the countries WaterAid supports are. Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste are just over an hour's flight from here, yet there are so many people lacking the basic human right of clean water. I wanted to find a way to support these communities so I am really excited to be onboard with WaterAid and support the incredible work they do"



Donate to our COVID-19 Crisis Appeal

Help us prevent the spread of COVID-19. Donate today and make a difference.



Your **\$50** can help us run a hand washing campaign to reduce the spread of COVID-19



Your **\$100** can help us provide materials and education on how to make soap in Papua New Guinea



Your **\$85** can help us provide education to build low-cost handwashing stations to reduce the spread of COVID-19



Your **\$140** can help us provide hygiene education to frontline healthcare workers to slow the spread of COVID-19



KOR interview

As KOR renews its support as a corporate partner of WaterAid for another two years, Managing Director Steve Pewtress reflects on his trip to Timor-Leste and the impact of seeing WaterAid's work on the ground.



Steve with the Village Chief in Timor-Leste

As a country on the doorstep of Australia, it comes as a shock to many over 40% of the population of Timor-Leste do not have access to clean water.

"It was a very short flight from Australia, but it was like landing on the other side of the world."

On this supporter trip, Steve visited villages without access to clean water, and other villages that had been supported by WaterAid.

"You could really see the contrasting difference between the villages who had access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene and those that didn't. It wasn't just having water, for children it meant they could go to school as they weren't sick from drinking dirty water."

After decades of struggle for independence, Timor-Leste faced the challenge of rebuilding

It was a very short flight from Australia, but it was like landing on the other side of the world.

the country from the ground up. The country overcame this faster than anyone expected, investing in health, education and electricity, but water, hygiene and toilets lagged behind.

WaterAid works with the government in Timor-Leste to make clean water, toilets and good hygiene as much a part of normal daily life as electricity has become. We help excluded people demand their rights and make sure local governments have the means and skills to help them.

"It has a profound impact visiting and seeing how people are living, and developing an understanding of WaterAid's holistic work. The prospect of getting on a plane and travelling to a developing country isn't always appealing, but the self-reflection and self-development you will gain is immense and you will develop an even deeper respect for the work of WaterAid and the work they are doing."

40% of the population of Timor-Leste do not have access to clean water.



KOR have been a corporate partner nationally for two years and have recently signed for a further two years. If your company is keen to explore a corporate partnership contact Federico Marcon at Federico.marcon@wateraid.org.au

Your support makes a difference

You can help provide clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene to the world's poorest communities. Simply complete this form. **Thank you.**

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