



WaterAid Cambodia
Country Strategy
2020 - 2023





WaterAid Cambodia Country Strategy 2020-2023



Our vision, mission and goal



Our **vision** is a world where everyone, everywhere has safe water, sanitation and hygiene.



Our **mission** is to transform the lives of the poorest and most marginalised people by improving access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene.



Our **goal** is to journey collaboratively with the Royal Government of Cambodia and partners to achieve sustainable, equitable and universal access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene by 2025 and beyond.

WE MAKE
CHANGE
HAPPEN BY

- Strengthening systems that lead to sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services.
- Inspiring the next generation of WASH leaders, especially women.
- Promoting collective action and building bridges between sectors.
- Exploring where the momentum for change lies, innovating and adapting.
- Learning and facilitating sector knowledge management.

Our Strategic Intents

Strong systems with skilled professionals and engaged leaders for sustainable, equitable and inclusive WASH

We will influence the sector actors to work together effectively, strengthen systems at national and sub-national levels in both rural and urban settings, and build a workforce of qualified, motivated and inspired leaders and technical personnel to deliver and sustain universal access.



Marginalised groups championing inclusive and equitable WASH

We will work to ensure that key actors in the WASH, health and private sectors are implementing inclusive and equitable WASH, and that issues facing marginalised groups are addressed.



Water security and WASH climate resilience strengthened

We will facilitate evidence generation on climate change and water security to inform decision-making, and to support the government in planning and delivering resilient, affordable and equitable WASH and health services. We will work to ensure that water security, climate resilience and adaptation are integrated into WASH and health programmes.



A healthy start for mothers and children

We will support the government to improve the quality of care in healthcare facilities through a people-centred care approach, through targeted hygiene behaviour-change campaigns and by linking national and global advocacy.



Contents

1.
Introduction
p.1

2.
**WaterAid
Cambodia**
p.2

3.
**Opportunities
and
Challenges**
p.4

4.
**Making
Change
Happen**
p.12

5.
**Our Theory
of Change**
p.14

6.
**Our Strategic
Intents**
p.17

1. Introduction

Cambodia is changing fast and finding some of the solutions to its development challenges. The number of children under five who are stunted, and the number of people who defecate in the open or drink unsafe water are still high compared to other countries in the region, with wide-ranging impacts on people's health and the economy. Yet these numbers are dropping quickly as Cambodia develops innovative scalable solutions to increase water and sanitation services. Cambodia is now aiming to accelerate this progress and ensure everyone, everywhere has access to drinking water and sanitation by 2025, while also looking for solutions to improve the quality of services, ensuring sustainability and reducing inequality.

WaterAid Cambodia's country strategy is designed to align with the Royal Government of Cambodia strategies such as the *National Action Plan on Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene*, the *Food Security and Nutrition Strategy* and the *National*

Health Strategic Plan. The strategy also aligns with WaterAid's Global Strategy 2015-2022 with its emphasis on being an influencing organisation and four aims to a) reduce inequality of gender and rights, b) strengthen services, c) integrate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) into health and other sectors and d) improve climate change adaptation.

This strategy sets out WaterAid Cambodia's intents from 2020 to 2023. It has been informed by a review of WaterAid Cambodia's country strategy 2017-2020 and consultation with external stakeholders. The strategy aims to give broad direction to WaterAid's work while allowing space to be responsive to new opportunities. Each year an annual Business Plan will be developed to operationalise the strategy. Quarterly reflections and an annual report will be used to track progress and inform adaptations to plans.

2. WaterAid Cambodia

WaterAid Cambodia was the first new country programme established under WaterAid's latest global strategy, and embodies the organisation's commitment to moving beyond service delivery to becoming an influencing organisation driven by creativity and innovation.

The country office opened in 2014 and the initial 'set up phase' focused on building a strong operational platform for programme growth. This was followed by a 'development' phase in which WaterAid started to find its niche and identity in the sector by experimenting with a variety of approaches, themes and partnerships. The WaterAid Country Strategy 2017-2020, informed by a review of our programme work since 2014, was developed in 2017 to guide WaterAid's journey and contributions to the WASH sector in Cambodia to achieve universal access by 2025.

A review of the Country Strategy implementation was conducted in 2019. This process looked at the changes in context and the external operating environment, our own position and relevance in the sector, and the country programme's progress, in order to inform this 2020-2023 strategy.

As was the case with the programme review in 2014, WaterAid is seen as: a collaborator, using partnerships to good effect with the government, civil society, private sector and academia; a bridge builder, playing a neutral role to catalyse better coordination within and between sectors; and a thought leader, offering sound technical expertise and knowledge management. WaterAid continues to be recognised for its advocacy skills, making effective use of evidence, relationships and engagement with the media, youth and the private sector. Stakeholders appreciate WaterAid's adaptive management approach, adjusting

programmes to the context, and pace of partners, and our unique capacity to address issues faced by marginalised groups including our approach to gender empowerment.

The country context review highlighted global and national trends: climate change, economic growth, urbanisation, increased private sector engagement, and increased youth concern and engagement on environmental issues in Cambodia. In the WASH sector, there is increased momentum for Open Defecation Free status. The government has prioritised WASH for All – where everyone can access WASH services – multi-sector integration, and movement on linking WASH and climate change. All of these have strongly informed our priorities.

Looking forward to the next four years, there are no significant changes in our Country Strategy but a tweak of the strategic intents. The Country Strategy 2020-2023 aims to journey collaboratively with The Royal Government of Cambodia, and partners, to achieve sustainable, equitable and universal access to safe water, sanitation and

hygiene by 2025. WaterAid Cambodia is committed to making change happen by strengthening and promoting (1) strong systems, skilled professionals and engaged leaders, (2) marginalised groups championing inclusive WASH, (3) a healthy start for mother and children, and (4) improved water security and WASH climate resilience in Cambodia.

We collaborate closely with the government and stakeholders to identify where we can add value and complement the work of others. In terms of new direction, the review encouraged WaterAid to expand its interventions to include water security and integration of climate resilience and adaptation in WASH and health sectors. This is in addition to the current interventions on building skilled professionals and strengthening services, promoting implementation of inclusive WASH and improving quality of care in healthcare facilities.

3. Opportunities and Challenges



How can everyone, everywhere in Cambodia enjoy access to water and sanitation by 2025?

We believe this ambitious aim set by the Royal Government of Cambodia is possible, but major steps need to be taken quickly. This section presents an overview of key opportunities and challenges to making this happen, and the questions WaterAid will be exploring through its programmes.

People to do the job

Cambodia currently does not have, nor is it producing, enough professionals with the right skills to deliver and sustain universal access. This lack of human resources is acknowledged by the sector actors, but it is not being directly addressed. Young graduates do not dream of working in the WASH sector, and sector professionals only receive piecemeal on-the-job training and are often not skilled in the latest good practice. Cambodia's WASH sector is male-dominated, with few women in decision-making or technical roles. Those in other sectors, such as the health sector, also do not receive adequate training on WASH or infection prevention practices during their professional training and development.

Developing capacity still remains one of the priorities in the National Action Plan II for rural WASH. However, actions taken by the government and stakeholders to strengthen WASH capacity do not meet the objectives and demands of the sector. This provides an opportunity for a concerted effort to address this challenge in a systematic way, including promoting women's leadership. Cambodia has a large youth population, and the government is focused on improving Cambodia's economic competitiveness through better quality education and a stronger human resource base.



How can Cambodia create the skilled and professional leaders and gender-diverse workforce it needs to deliver and sustain universal access?

Cambodia's first province with universal access to WASH

In the rural WASH sector, Cambodia now has in place a clear policy framework aimed at reaching universal access by 2025, and active coordination mechanisms at the national level. This provides an opportunity for collective action with stakeholders working together and maximising resources to deliver the National Action Plan. Access to rural sanitation facilities has now increased to 71%, and safe drinking water to 58% (CSES 2017). In 2019, many communes and four districts became open defecation free. If Cambodia is to reach its 2025 target and address the WASH needs of everyone, the next challenge is to work out how to attain universal access at a provincial level, particularly ensuring that the most marginalised groups are included and have access to services. Five provinces (Kampong Speu, Svay Rieng, Kampong Chhnang, Prey Veng and Kep) have now committed to becoming open defecation free by 2023, two years before the national target.

Nationwide decentralisation of rural WASH functions to district and provincial authorities came into effect in January 2020. There are significant hurdles and challenges. There is little knowledge

of policy frameworks at the sub-national level, limited coordination and no monitoring systems to track progress against national plans. There will need to be a concerted effort to develop capacity and transfer sufficient finances to deliver at the sub-national level, and to ensure that investments in WASH support the inclusion of the most marginalised communities and households.

In 2015 Cambodia faced its most severe drought on record as a result of climate change and multiple threats to water resources. The effects of the drought continued to be felt until 2019. To support community's access to water, much of the community water supply infrastructure has been installed and will need a lot of effort to maintain and ensure it works. There is also growing number of private water operators, often with precarious business models, serving in rural areas.



How can national and sub-national systems be strengthened to enable the first province in Cambodia to provide sustainable and inclusive services to all its population?

Changing hygiene behaviours

There have been increasing efforts and more investment in promoting hygiene behaviour change in water, sanitation and hygiene recently in Cambodia. The Ministry of Rural Development has produced a national behaviour change communication guideline that prioritises ending open defecation, handwashing with soap and treating drinking water. Recently the Ministry, with support from the World Bank, IDE and partners has endorsed a National Social Behaviour Change Communication Campaign Strategy for the sector. It is expected that the campaign strategy will inform and guide the sector and stakeholders to align their sanitation and hygiene messages with the national messages. Several sets of campaign materials and tools have been developed for the sector to use to align with the strategy.

Although there will be a campaign strategy guiding the sector's implementation, there are still limited resources and limited stakeholder capacity to implement the campaign. Dissemination and ensuring wider adoption of the campaign products and concepts will need to be strengthened and fostered. There are significant opportunities that can be leveraged to boost efforts in this area.



How can sector stakeholders work together to roll out a national hygiene behaviour change campaign, and how can the private sector address the supply of handwashing products?

Reducing inequality early

Despite becoming a lower-middle income country, deep inequalities persist across all areas of human development. Gender inequality remains pervasive. Rates of gender-based violence remain high (UNFPA 2014), women earn lower wages



than men, and there is poor representation of women in public decision-making positions and politics. These inequalities are evident in Cambodia's progress towards universal WASH, with groups of the population being marginalised from services and decision making. Many of the people in these groups, especially women and children, face multiple disadvantages and layers of discrimination, due to the interaction of geographic, social and economic factors.

In Cambodia there is a vibrant community working on disability inclusion, backed by strong development partner support, and a growing policy focus on social protection for other vulnerable groups. Inclusive programming shows glimpses of how barriers to inclusion can be overcome. There is recognition that reaching these marginalised groups will be the hardest part of achieving universal access. Efforts to do so need to begin now.



How can the sector better understand the barriers faced by marginalised groups, women and children and take action to address these?

Health care facilities that protect the health of the community

The Sustainable Development Goals require a move beyond WASH in the household to WASH in all settings. Healthcare facilities are a critical institution in which to consider WASH. A clean and hygienic facility is the foundation of quality care and the services and behaviours practised by healthcare workers often set the standard for behaviours in the wider community. In Cambodia almost all mothers now give birth in a healthcare facility, yet the number of babies who die in their first month of life is not reducing at the same rate as other health gains are being made. Furthermore, many patients who visit a healthcare facility for treatment risk acquiring a new infection in the facility. In part, the reasons for this are that healthcare facilities: lack a safe and reliable water supply and toilets that are accessible to all patients and staff; lack the equipment and systems to manage medical waste safely; and lack the leadership, knowledge and motivation required for healthcare workers to practise good hygiene behaviours. Improving WASH reduces the risk of acquiring infections for patients as well as staff

and, in turn, the surrounding community. Women's lives in particular can be improved through WASH in healthcare facilities as most frontline healthcare workers and users of healthcare facilities are women.

Significant reforms in the health sector aimed at improving the quality of care and equity in access to services are being implemented. Finance for healthcare facilities is being tied to performance, and basic funding is becoming available for health care facility managers to make improvements. A national social accountability framework incorporates healthcare services and presents opportunities for citizens, with a focus on women, to provide feedback on the services they receive.



How can health sector systems effectively address hygiene behaviours and WASH services in healthcare facilities as a basis of quality of care?

Water security and climate resilience integration

The impacts of climate change have become more visible nationally and globally. Changes in temperature, drought, floods and forest fires have become more frequent around the world during the past decade.

Cambodia experienced El Niño in 2015 and late 2017, and a prolonged dry season in 2019. Many provinces were affected by drought and increases in temperatures, with some places reaching 40-42 degrees Celsius (18 provinces affected in 2015-16 and 16 provinces in 2019). Rural households experienced water shortages and urban households experienced electricity and water cutoffs. Water security has become a political priority.

Water resources and water quality are another area of concern affecting sanitation and hygiene practices, particularly for rural communities. Water contamination from increased industry and flooding is having a significant impact on water quality. Poor quality water needs thorough treatment before drinking. Hand washing with soap cannot be practised without enough clean

water. Flooding can prevent people from using a toilet, and can lead to further contamination of water if sewage is not properly contained.

The government and wider stakeholders are recognising the growing issue of the climate crisis. However there are multiple, complex challenges to overcome in terms of providing a long term, sustainable response, as well as building community resilience to climate change and water resource issues. Responses to addressing the WASH issues impacted by climate change and water security are still limited both in policy and service delivery .



How can sector stakeholders better address WASH challenges impacted by climate change, water security and scarcity, and build community resilience, especially for the most marginalised?



4. Making Change Happen

We believe that universal access to WASH by 2025 in Cambodia is possible and we will use all our resources, energy and passion to act as an influencer. This requires us to play multiple roles. At times we will lead, catalyse action and innovate; sometimes we will invest in others through financial support and capacity development; and sometimes we will collaborate and add our weight to existing initiatives. We will make change happen in the following ways:

Systems and people

WaterAid believes that everyone will enjoy sustainable WASH when there are strong systems to deliver these services and the right number of capable people to deliver these systems. We will strengthen systems that lead to sustainable water and sanitation services for everyone in rural areas, secondary cities and in healthcare facilities, with a

particular focus on tackling systemic discrimination of marginalised communities and gender inequality. We will inspire the next generation of WASH leaders and professionals, especially women, who will lead Cambodia to achieve universal access.

Collective action

WaterAid believes that universal access can be achieved by 2025 if stakeholders work together under government leadership and with a shared vision of universal access. We will work in ways that promote collective action at the national and sub-national level. We will act as a convener, brokering relationships and forging partnerships to strengthen sector networks, building bridges between sectors and drawing in new actors from outside the traditional WASH sector (for example corporates, youth and academia).

Innovate and adapt

Cambodia is a rapidly-changing country in a dynamic and restless region. WaterAid will continually seek to understand where the momentum for change lies and maximise new opportunities. We will be courageous and take informed risks to leverage new possibilities, with a focus on the private sector and youth. We will be creative and innovate to find new ways to accelerate progress towards universal access. To keep up with the rapidly-shifting context, we will work in ways that allow us to be flexible. We will set a clear direction and regularly pause to reflect on changes to our context and the effectiveness of our activities, and we will adapt future plans as needed.

Learning and evidence

WaterAid will learn from its own experiences and the work of others, pursue an impactful research agenda and facilitate wider sector knowledge management. We will maximise new technology and social media trends to develop real-time learning systems. We will model solutions, evaluating the process and documenting costs to generate evidence, and communicate this evidence in compelling ways to bring about policy changes. We will systematically evaluate programme themes to inform sector practices, set WaterAid's future direction and demonstrate impact.

5. Our Theory of Change



Assumptions

Responsible government actors are willing to lead and own sector WASH efforts

Decentralisation reforms progress and are sustained, transferring function/ responsibility and budget to districts and communes

Other WASH sector actors continue to focus on development of market-based solutions

Broader Goal

Journey collaboratively with Royal Government of Cambodia and partners to achieve sustainable, equitable and universal access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene by 2025 and beyond

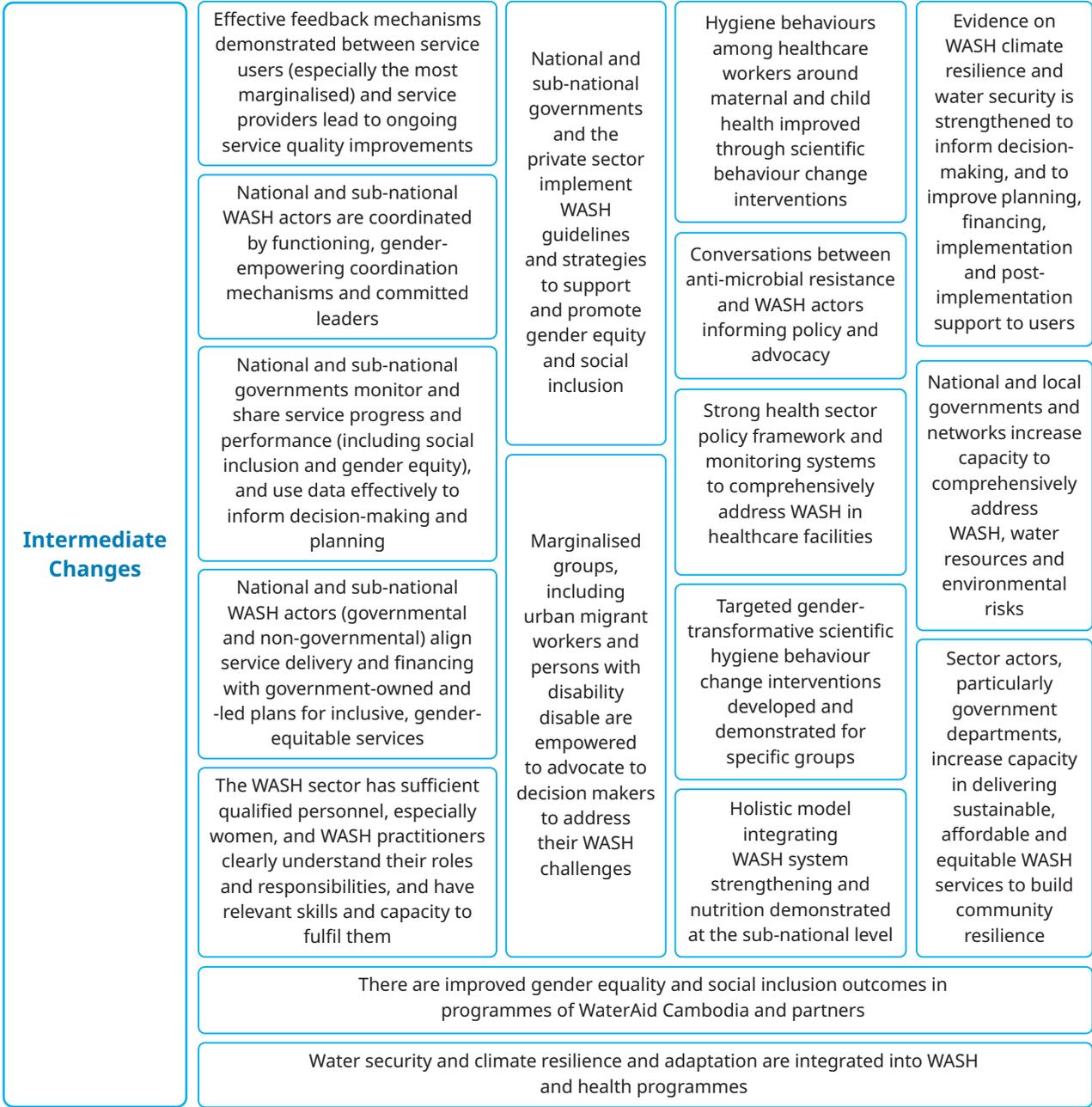
Strategic Intents

Strong systems with skilled professionals and engaged leaders for sustainable, equitable and inclusive WASH in place

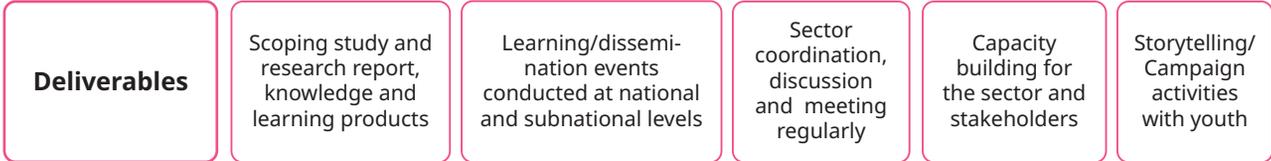
Marginalised groups championed inclusive and equitable WASH

A healthy start for mother and children improved

Water security and WASH climate resilience strengthened



Approaches	System and people	Collective action	Innovate and adapt	Learning and evidence
-------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	---------------------------	------------------------------





6. Our Strategic Intents



Strong systems with skilled professionals and engaged leaders for sustainable, equitable and inclusive WASH



Water security and WASH climate resilience strengthened

WaterAid Cambodia's goal is to **journey collaboratively with the Royal Government of Cambodia and partners to achieve sustainable, equitable and universal access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene by 2025.** The four strategic intents and the pathways described below are designed to set the broad direction for our work to achieve our goal. We will maximise our resources and expertise by integrating cross-cutting themes within our strategic intents, and building linkages between the strategic intents themselves. We will integrate **gender, equity and social inclusion, and water security** across all our strategic intents.

Marginalised groups championing inclusive and equitable WASH



A healthy start for mothers and children



Strong systems with skilled professionals and engaged leaders for sustainable, equitable and inclusive WASH

We will influence sector actors to work together effectively, strengthen systems at national and sub-national levels in both rural and urban settings, and build a workforce of qualified, motivated and inspired leaders and technical personnel to deliver and sustain universal access.

We will enable government and sector partners at the sub-national level to work together, maximising existing resources, to develop credible plans and put in place systems to monitor progress and there by inform future decisions. We will work to ensure citizens' voices, especially those of women and marginalised people, are heard and that plans address their needs. We will focus sector stakeholders on the challenges of sustainability in terms of: local water resources, quality and functionality of water supply; maintaining open defecation free communities; and the public health opportunities for making WASH programming more nutrition-sensitive. To support and sustain WASH systems, we intend to build stronger national capacity to meet the emerging technical, social and governance challenges in the WASH sector. We will work with partners to develop a range of activities that target professionals, especially women, throughout their professional careers, from first attracting young people into the sector, to upgrading core skills of mid-career professionals and empowering senior leaders.



Changes we want to see:

- Effective feedback mechanisms demonstrated between service users (especially the most marginalised) and service providers lead to ongoing service quality improvements.
- National and sub-national WASH actors are coordinated by functioning, gender-empowering coordination mechanisms and committed leaders.
- National and sub-national governments monitor and share service progress and performance (including social inclusion and gender equity), and use data effectively to inform decision making and planning.
- National and sub-national WASH actors (governmental and non-governmental) align service delivery and financing with government-owned and -led plans for inclusive, gender-equitable services.
- The WASH sector has sufficient qualified personnel, especially women, and WASH practitioners clearly understand their roles and responsibilities, and have relevant skills and capacity to fulfil them.



Marginalised groups champion inclusive and equitable WASH

We will work to ensure that key actors in the WASH, health and private sectors are practising inclusive WASH, and that issues facing marginalised groups are addressed.

We will deepen the sector's understanding of the barriers facing marginalised groups by empowering these groups to document their lived experience and advocate for solutions. We will support the government, non-governmental organisations and the private sector to promote and model an equity and inclusion approach. We will integrate inclusion into all our programmes, including increasing our capacity for programming which contributes to gender equality.



WaterAid/ Sokmeng You

Changes we want to see:

- National and sub-national governments and the private sector implement WASH guidelines and strategies to support and promote gender equity and social inclusion.
- Marginalised groups, including urban migrant workers and persons with disability are empowered to advocate to decision makers to address their WASH challenges.
- There are improved gender equality and social inclusion outcomes in programmes, organisational processes, systems and the culture of WaterAid Cambodia and partners.



A healthy start for mothers and children

We will support the government to improve quality of care in healthcare facilities through a people-centred care approach, targeted hygiene behaviour change, and linking national and global advocacy.

We will strengthen government policy, systems and frameworks to improve WASH and waste management services and practices in all healthcare facilities, both public and private, with particular emphasis on delivery rooms. We will use our role as a convener and our creative energy to support the national government's ongoing efforts to roll out a compelling national hygiene behaviour change campaign. We will work with the private sector to introduce innovative WASH products, such as handwashing stations and latrine shelters, to enable people to practise new behaviours. We will advocate for national approaches that reach all population groups, particularly disabled people and other marginalised groups, and focus on staff, patients and family members working in or accessing healthcare facilities.



Changes we want to see:

- Hygiene behaviours among healthcare workers around maternal and child health improved through scientific behaviour change interventions.
- Conversations between anti-microbial resistance and WASH actors informing policy and advocacy.
- Strong health sector policy framework and monitoring systems to comprehensively address WASH in healthcare facilities.
- Targeted gender-transformative scientific hygiene behaviour change interventions developed and demonstrated for specific groups.
- Holistic model integrating WASH system strengthening and nutrition demonstrated at the sub-national level.



Water security and WASH climate resilience strengthened

We will support the government and partners to improve the integration of water security and WASH climate resilience in WASH and health service delivery.

We will strengthen the evidence base on WASH climate resilience and water security, and use it to inform decision-making and to support the government in planning and delivering sustainable, affordable and equitable WASH and health services. We will support and advocate for the integration of WASH climate resilience and adaptation into WASH and health programmes, approaches and interventions.



Changes we want to see:

- Evidence on WASH climate resilience and water security is strengthened to inform decision-making, and to improve planning, financing, implementation and post-implementation support to users.
- National and local governments and networks increase capacity to comprehensively address WASH, water resources and environmental risks.
- Sector actors, particularly government departments, increase capacity in delivering sustainable, affordable and equitable WASH services to build community resilience.
- Water security and climate resilience and adaptation are integrated into WASH and health programmes.

Our values

Our **values** define our culture and are at the very heart of WaterAid – who we are, what we do and how we do it.



Respect: We treat everyone with dignity and respect and champion the rights and contribution of all to achieve a fairer world.



Accountability: We are accountable to those whose lives we hope to see transformed, to those we work with and to those who support us.



Courage: We are bold and inspiring in our actions and words, and uncompromising in our determination to pursue our mission.



Collaboration: We work with others to maximise our impact, respecting diversity and difference in the pursuit of common goals.



Innovation: We are creative and agile, always learning, and prepared to take risks to accelerate change.



Integrity: We act with honesty and conviction and our actions are consistent with openness, equality and human rights.

WaterAid Cambodia

S.I Building 3rd floor, #93, Preah Sihanouk Blvd,
Sangkat Chaktomuk, Phnom Penh, Cambodia



+855 17 935 083



WaterAidCambodia



www.wateraid.org/au



WaterAidCambodia

