

Oasis

Your WaterAid Magazine



Autumn
2021



WaterAid/ Nana Kofi Acquah

Highlights

- The COVID-19 response continues
- Toilets and Climate Change
- A Day in the Life in Cambodia



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.

Find out more: wateraid.org.au

Cover photo: *Kokoyeh, 8, Nancy, 6, and Lucy, 5, play with the clean water as their way of celebrating the new water pump, in Tombohuaun, Kailahun District, Sierra Leone.*

Credit: *WaterAid/ Nana Kofi Acquah*

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

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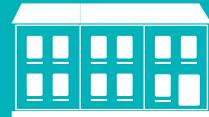
WaterAidAus

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.





From our Chief Executive

Did you know toilets can help fight climate change? Yes, you read that right, toilets! To celebrate World Toilet Day in November, WaterAid released a report about toilets and their important role in the fight against climate change and infectious diseases. But as important as they are, one in four people still do not have one. You can read more about this on pages eight and nine.

In the challenging year that was 2020, we saw communities come together in incredible ways to protect each other and help slow the spread of COVID-19. Take a trip with me to several of our country programs around the world, to check in on our continued COVID-19 prevention and hygiene work.

Closer to home, we visit Cambodia, where we spoke to Sokmal and his family about a day in his life, discussing where he collects water, what it is like working in the rice fields and his hopes for the future.



These and many more stories are inside this edition of our Autumn Oasis. I hope you enjoy catching up on WaterAid's work and feel inspired by the positive change happening globally.

Continue to take care of yourself and those around you.

Rosie Wheen

Rosie Wheen
Chief Executive – WaterAid Australia



Around the world

What has WaterAid been up to recently? Here are some of the things you've helped us achieve with our local partners.

Rwanda

WaterAid Rwanda and partners in the Nyamagabe district recently visited the new water and sanitation facilities constructed in schools under the Nyamagabe Alba project, supported by WaterAid. The facilities include an inclusive school toilet and a menstrual health management room, in an effort to keep girls in school.



Mali

WaterAid Mali is working in the districts of Bla and Kati to improve the living conditions of local people through improved water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). Part of this is improved WASH infrastructures in communities, schools and health facilities, such as this new handwashing station installed outside the Bogoni Health Centre.

Tanzania

International artist and WaterAid Tanzania's Sanitation and Hygiene Ambassador, Mrisho Mpoto, continues to advocate for *Clean Hands for All*. Through the hygiene and behaviour change campaign in Tanzania. Mrisho's main message is about balancing our daily activities with handwashing because, 'life has to go on.'





WaterAid Corporate Spotlight – Cristiano Carvalho, Aqwest



What does Aqwest do?

Aqwest supplies potable water to 17,000 residential, commercial and light industrial customers in the City of Bunbury and surrounding areas.

Why did Aqwest choose to support WaterAid?

The WaterAid membership delivers excellent alignment with Aqwest's environmental sustainability strategic priorities. It also offers a unique opportunity to engage our staff, customers and stakeholders with WaterAid's work and increase their understanding of the challenges facing communities without access to clean water, sanitation and good hygiene.

Why do you think water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) are important?

It plays a pivotal role in supporting communities and societies. Many advances in public health are due to improved sanitation conditions, and nowadays, the relationship between education and WASH is well understood, documented and proven to be a pillar for change.

Tell us about your trip to Vietnam with WaterAid, who did you meet and what did you learn?

This has been by far, the highlight of my working life. I had the opportunity and privilege to work with a team of WaterAid water professionals in Vietnam on a Water Utility Improvement Program coordinated by the Australian Water Association and the Vietnam Water Sewerage Association. Over three years, our team partnered with a Vietnamese water utility team on a multidisciplinary capacity building program which included staff exchanges, workshops and site visits.

What were the most memorable part of your trips to Vietnam?

I was told by a senior Vietnamese official that if potable water wasn't provided to the province, people would defer to bottled water or soft drinks, which would create a larger and longer lasting problem in the community and country. This stuck with me, and really underscored how water, sanitation and hygiene is the overarching purpose of a water utility.

What would you say to any other companies considering supporting WaterAid?

They would be supporting a credible and legitimate organisation that is making a difference in many parts of the world. Further, WaterAid supports the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This is a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. Finally, supporting WaterAid offers valuable opportunities for staff development, particularly in areas which they would not normally work in or know about.



WaterAid's COVID-19 Response Update

Preventing the spread of COVID-19 requires strong and urgent action to protect the most vulnerable and was at the forefront of WaterAid's work in 2020. But it is not over. Right now, our teams around the world continue to install handwashing facilities in areas where people need them most and run public awareness campaigns making sure that everyone knows how important it is to wash their hands with soap, when to do it and how to do it correctly. Here are some highlights of WaterAid's ongoing global COVID-19 response.



Cambodia

Following a new outbreak of COVID-19 in Cambodia, the team worked with the Sambor District Administration to continue their COVID-19 prevention campaign. This included mobile broadcasting through loudspeakers on motorbikes, education on WHO standard guidelines and delivering masks and hand sanitiser.





Bangladesh

To respond to the second wave of COVID-19, WaterAid Bangladesh created 'Handwashing on Wheels', a mobile handwashing unit which follows commuters in the city's most populated areas, aiding them with easy access to handwashing with soap. The units encourage people to wash their hands frequently and are equipped with multiple inclusive sinks, liquid soap, water-tanks and digital tablets which display handwashing awareness messages through songs!



Nepal

Over 3.5 million people in Nepal still do not have access to basic water, with just over 25% of the existing water supply systems classed as functional. On top of this, 57% of the population of Nepal do not have handwashing facilities with soap and water on premises, and 36% of Healthcare Facilities (HCF) do not have basic water supply. To help slow the spread of COVID-19, WaterAid Nepal worked with the government on a large-scale hygiene promotion campaign, including education on how to properly wash hands, installation of handwashing infrastructure and supporting local entrepreneurs to produce masks and liquid soap.





An open-air hanging toilet.
Kalabogi,
Dacope, Khulna,
Bangladesh



How do toilets fight climate change?

On World Toilet Day 2020, we asked the question, how do toilets fight climate change? Toilets are vital in fighting the impact of climate change, as they help limit the spread of infectious diseases, many of which are being exacerbated by climate change. Unfortunately, one in four people still don't have a toilet. That's why we released our report, on the impact of climate change on the sanitation crisis, to highlight that living without a toilet endangers the health and livelihoods of the world's most vulnerable people. Only 45% of the

world's population can rely on safely managed sanitation. A staggering two billion people do not have access to a private toilet, and more than 600 million people have no choice but to practise open defecation.

A lack of clean water, decent toilets and hygiene claims the lives of around 800 children under five every day and in total, around 829,000 lives every year. Now climate change is aggravating the sanitation crisis. **Extreme weather – floods, powerful cyclones, rising temperatures, prolonged droughts – are causing irreparable damage to weak sanitation systems and causing illnesses to spread further in vulnerable communities.** An estimated 250,000 additional deaths per year are predicted between 2030 and 2050 due to climate change and many of these deaths will be linked to poor sanitation. So, what is WaterAid doing about?

With the release of our report, we called for urgent action from governments and the international community to increase investment in climate resilient sanitation services. Safe, reliable, and inclusive sanitation services help prevent the spread of infectious diseases. We are encouraging and working with governments to include sanitation plans in their climate change adaptation strategies so communities are better prepared to withstand the impacts of climate change.



WaterAid/Habibul Haque

Anita Das (40) now has a hygienic toilet which she regularly cleans. Following WaterAid awareness program most people are now conscious about good hygienic practices in this area



A Day in The Life

Name: Sokmal

Lives: Kratie Province,
alongside the Mekong River

Shares: A house with his wife
Soeymom and five children

Occupation: Works in the
rice fields



Sokmal and his family are part of WaterAid's Healthy People, Healthy Place project, which aims to bring clean water and hygiene behaviour change to the Sambour district, as well as championing inclusive water, sanitation and hygiene for marginalised groups.



What is your job?

I work in the rice fields and I grow corn. I also work in construction seasonally and also works for other people. My wife comes with me to dig the cassava, pick cashew nuts fruits. We bring the smaller child and we keep the bigger children with their grandparents. We wake up 4am and go to sleep by 9pm.

What do you like about living here?

We have land that we can grow rice, corn, vegetable and other food.

Where do you get your water from?

The river. The water from the river we have to boil it. We boil it here. Before, this village had a water filter from another organisation. Now it's broken so we have to boil water again. The walk to the river is steep and we slip because the water is heavy.



**Sokmal 39 and
Seoymom,
35 with their
children.
Kratie Province**

WaterAid/ Remissa Mak

How long does boiling take?

Five litres takes about half an hour. Sometimes when we are in a rush we don't boil the water and the children get sick. When we drink the raw water, we sometimes get a stomach ache. When children are sick, I bring the child to the medical centre. I feel afraid for their lives.

Do you have any hopes for children?

I didn't because I don't have any money. But now I work hard so that I can buy them the books for them to learn. Three are in school. I have not asked them what they want to do when they grow up. I don't know, I just want them to have knowledge.

What facilities would you like in community?

I want the hospital the most. The health centre is far from this village. We have to pay for transportation for the patient, or we have to borrow the motorbike. We would like to have road, clean water, well, hospital and we would like them to help people.

