

# Nepal



Nepal is famous for its Himalayan mountains, terraced hillsides and breathtaking landscapes. But life here is often as tough as the terrain.

The country remains among the poorest and least developed in the world. Most people live and farm in rural areas, sometimes with little or no road access. Cut off from the outside world, many families struggle to meet their most basic needs.

In recent years, Nepal has made good progress getting more people clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene. Nine in ten people now have clean water. However, nearly half the population still needs a decent toilet. Every day, children die because of diarrhoeal diseases.

Nepal is also extremely vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters, like earthquakes,

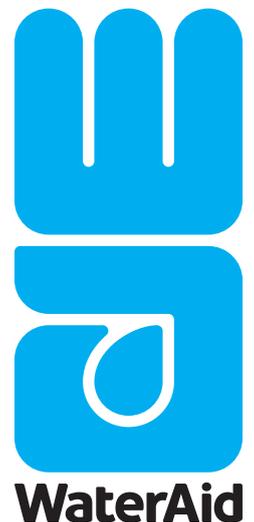
floods and landslides. This makes long-term water and toilet solutions even more difficult.

Our job is to reach the most excluded people with the taps and toilets they need. Women and girls. People living in remote locations. Those who are discriminated against because of their caste. People with disabilities. With clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene, health, education and livelihoods improve. And Nepal's poorest people can break free from poverty.

▼ **"It is not easy to carry a heavy water pot at this age. My legs tremble and I am exhausted after walking a few steps. The walking path is narrow and steep."** Bishnumaya Shrestha, 77, lives in the district of Dolakha, home to some of Nepal's most excluded people. Here, many families collect water from dirty streams, reached by dangerous paths down the mountain.



WaterAid/Mani Karmacharya



# The challenge

In 2015, Nepal recognised access to water and sanitation as a fundamental human right. But there's a long way to go to make these normal for everyone.

In remote mountains, the rugged, harsh landscape makes water systems expensive to build and difficult to deliver. Women and girls risk their lives fetching water from deep gorges. Collecting enough for a family can take five or six hours. A lack of toilets means this water can also become contaminated, spreading diseases.

In urban areas, growing populations put huge strain on water and sewage services. Waste is dumped in drains and waterways, polluting groundwater and water sources. Buying safe water is very expensive and makes life harder for people living in poverty.

Women and girls have particularly hard lives. As well as losing hours each day collecting water, they are often shunned by society during their periods. A deep-rooted caste system complicates things further – lower caste families are often unable to use certain water sources.

Over the coming years, our focus will be on 16 projects in Nepal's poorest districts. We'll work in areas where families face severe problems accessing water and sanitation, made worse by gender and caste discrimination.

Guided by our strategy, we'll make sure that the most vulnerable and marginalised people get clean water, toilets and good hygiene. We'll work in disaster affected areas. We'll use innovative technology.

We'll ensure that water, toilets and hygiene are put at the centre of health and education. And we'll influence the government to make effective policies that deliver water and toilets to all.

► **Nepal's terrain makes water collection dangerous. We use local knowledge and long-lasting solutions to bring clean water to those most in need.**



**1 in 10 people have no clean water close to home**



**4 in 10 people have no decent toilet of their own**



**5 in 10 people lack hygiene facilities**

Population: **28.6 million**<sup>1</sup>

% of population living below poverty line: **25%**<sup>2</sup>

Life expectancy at birth: **70 years**<sup>3</sup>

Total number of deaths among children under five due to poor water, sanitation and hygiene: **437**<sup>4</sup>

% of schools with no clean water: **23%**<sup>5</sup>

% of schools with no toilet: **17%**<sup>6</sup>



WaterAid/Mani Karmacharya

1, 2, 3. Source: data.worldbank.org

4. Source: Based on data from the Global Burden of Disease Study 2017 and Prüss-Ustün et al (2014)

5, 6. Source: WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation

## What we are achieving

We began working in Nepal in 1987. Since then, we've worked tirelessly to bring clean water, toilets and hygiene to the most vulnerable people, living in extremely challenging environments.

Between 2011-2016 alone, we reached over 317,000 people with water, more than 455,000 people with toilets and over 241,000 with good hygiene.

### Hygiene promotion through immunisation

Keeping newborn babies safe and healthy needs clean hands. Now, thanks to our groundbreaking project with the Nepal Government, new parents are learning vital hygiene information when they take their babies for routine vaccinations.

We teamed up with healthcare workers in four districts and trained them to share good hygiene practices with parents when vaccinating their babies. Our approach was the first of its kind in the world.

The pilot was so successful that the Ministry of Health is now expanding it nationally alongside their vaccination programme. This has the potential to save the lives of thousands of children, and keep them and their families healthy.

## Rebuilding lives after disaster strikes

In 2015 Nepal was hit by two catastrophic earthquakes. 8,500 people lost their lives, and 1,570 water supplies and thousands more toilets were destroyed. In the months and years that followed, we have worked with plumbers like Krishna Sunuwar. By rebuilding taps and toilets in the worst hit villages, we can stop diarrhoea claiming even more lives.



▲ Krishna's tireless work helped his village recover. He says, **"When I came here after the earthquake, the situation was not good. Now the hygiene and sanitation situation is improved and people have access to clean drinking water."**



As a result of our pilot project, mothers or caregivers practicing good hygiene increased from 2% to 53% after one year, and cases of diarrhoea dropped from 15% to 5%.

◀ Samjhana is one of thousands of mothers who has learnt about better hygiene: **"Doctors taught us about maintaining sanitation when I took my child for immunisation. They taught us to wash hands before touching the baby, provide the babies only boiled milk and water, to keep food covered, and put baby's faeces in the toilet."**





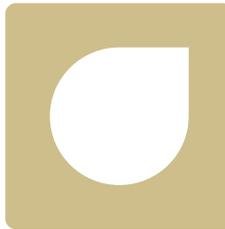
WaterAid/Prizma Ghimire

## Tackling taboos

Periods are still a taboo topic in many areas of Nepal, and can stop a girl from going to school, entering the kitchen, looking in a mirror, and being in the presence of male family members.

Across Nepal, our projects tackle gender discrimination. Between 2014 and 2016 alone, we worked in 74 schools to challenge traditional beliefs in both boys and girls, to make periods normal.

▲ Students attend a workshop to overcome mistaken beliefs, and learn about staying well on their periods.



▼ “These days, the situation has completely changed,” Mira told us. “Such diseases do not occur frequently. I think it was due to the dirty water we were drinking.”



WaterAid/Mani Koirachan

## “The water from the tap is clean”

Mira lives in Mayanku, a very remote mountain village. During the rainy season it can only be reached on foot.

Until recently, families relied on dirty water sources and went to the toilet in the open. Both adults and children suffered from frequent sickness and diarrhoea.

Working in challenging locations like Mayanku is our strength. Thanks to UK aid from the British people, we worked with the community to build toilets, and pipe clean water to a series of tapstands. For the first time, clean water is normal for everyone in this isolated village.

**We are an international not-for-profit, determined to make clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene normal for everyone, everywhere within a generation. Only by tackling these three essentials in ways that last can people change their lives for good.**

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