Global annual report
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We have ten years to reach everyone, everywhere. Explore how we are working across our global federation to make this goal reality.

Climate change and COVID-19 threaten our ability to bring clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene to everyone, everywhere. In 2019–20, we tackled them head on.

We have ten years left to reach everyone, everywhere by 2030. Globally, we have achieved so much in the Sustainable Development Goal period – but now face substantial risks to realising this and other Goals.

With climate change increasingly threatening gains and making progress harder, and COVID-19 causing significant disruption, what we do is more relevant and urgent than ever, and we have a vital part to play in overcoming both challenges.

To maximise our impact, we have been progressively shifting our focus to directly deliver fewer services, increasing work in two complementary areas. First, we are strengthening the systems needed for people to benefit from these essentials long into the future – such as effective utility management, equipment quality and maintenance and community involvement. And second, we are influencing governments and companies to ensure their policies and practices accelerate positive change. Read on to explore highlights of our push into this Decade of Action.

COVID-19

As the year under review came to a close, around one third of humanity was under some form of lockdown while governments attempted to contain COVID-19. We quickly responded, recognising the dynamic nature of transmission and the diverse needs of the countries where we work.

By the end of March, many of our country offices had helped to shape national emergency response plans through government-led working groups and civil society platforms. We built on existing hygiene behaviour change initiatives, quickly adapting these to amplify key COVID-19 hygiene messages through digital, social and mass media channels. And almost all our country teams had installed new handwashing stations in key locations.
Our reach

Last year, with our partners, we reached millions of people through our work in communities, schools and healthcare centres, and through our advocacy.

Direct reach

We supported communities to reach the following numbers of people:
- 400,000 with clean water
- 700,000 with decent toilets
- 1,900,000 with good hygiene

We supported schools to reach the following numbers of people:
- 180,000 with clean water
- 210,000 with decent toilets
- 1,100,000 with good hygiene

We supported healthcare facilities to reach people for the following numbers of visits:
- 1,000,000 with clean water
- 1,300,000 with decent toilets
- 1,300,000 with good hygiene

Influencing

We influenced policies, strategies and standards around the world. Last year we helped secure changes to national policies, strategies or standards in ten countries to benefit people living without clean water, decent toilets or good hygiene. See more on what we achieved in Malawi on the map below.

We advocated globally and regionally. At the World Health Assembly in May, a groundbreaking resolution was unanimously passed which we had campaigned hard for: to improve WASH in healthcare facilities. See the map on page 4 for more on our work with the Zambian Government to make this reality.

1. How do we calculate our reach and impact? We count users of the services we provide directly in different ways, according to where we reach them: • In or near people’s homes – population served by water, sanitation and hygiene facilities. • Schools – school population plus staff. • Healthcare facilities – total number of patient visits over one year plus staff. We count people as having been reached with good hygiene through behaviour change activities when they have been exposed to those activities at least three times in a year.
We work in 34 countries across the world. Here are just some stories from our work last year.

Saba Gill, 32, Project Coordinator at AGAHE, talking to school girls about hygiene in Government Primary School, Jatoi, District Muzaffargarh, Province Punjab, Pakistan, December 2017.
Using social art techniques for behaviour change

In Nicaragua, we have been using social arts to drive water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) behaviour change among 33 communities across Waslala, Puerto Cabezas and Waspan municipalities in the Autonomous Region of the North Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua. In year three of the five-year Lazos de Agua Rural WASH project, the communities worked with a group of artists to create mosaic murals, plays and short films around subjects including fee payment, safe water management and storage, and handwashing – all behaviours that, if reinforced, will enable communities to sustain and enjoy the full benefits of improvements to WASH services.

Participants built the mosaics they designed in prominent public places, to remind communities of positive behaviours. And the short films and plays have been presented in rural communities, followed by fora to gather attendees’ impressions, giving space for people to reflect on the importance of improving their hygiene habits, why it is important to pay drinking water service fees, how the situations in the films and theatre reflect the realities of their experiences, and how they can improve their health through hygiene habits.

To increase their relevance to communities, the two films reinforcing handwashing and water treatment and storage were produced in the local language of Miskitu and in Spanish respectively, and the four plays took into account local cultures and characteristics.

As a further part of the project, we also trained 51 change agents to develop playful, dynamic activities that promote behaviour change in their communities.

Building networks to reach rural Colombia

In Colombia, rural communities have historically been left out of national WASH policy rollouts, lacking the technical, social and financial support they needed to secure access to sustainable WASH services. A strong rural-urban divide has meant local governments have had very little capacity to enact national-level policies, which have not considered rural contexts, needs and priorities.

Currently, rural WASH policy development has had unprecedented momentum in Colombia, with the Government launching a programme to increase access to water in La Guajira region from 4% to 70% in four years. Since 2016, our country team has been working with partners to create a way to share knowledge between organisations, and build joint strategies and initiatives, to ensure this momentum translates to access to sustainable WASH services in the rural communities in urgent need.

With UNICEF, Action Against Hunger and CAWST (Centre for Affordable Water and Sanitation Technology), we launched a National Network for WASH Sector Strengthening to collectively build a transformative and creative space for change. The Network meets monthly to share knowledge, coordinate actions and jointly advocate better policy and implementation around WASH services. The first of its kind in Colombia, the Network has brought together representatives from international and local NGOs, universities, private sector stakeholders, UN Agencies, the Ministry of Health and the Vice Ministry of Water and Sanitation.
Supporting vulnerable communities in Burkina Faso

We constructed 12 EcoSan (ecological sanitation) latrines in Zabendella village to support the livelihoods of local women. Their income was made through market gardening, which was becoming increasingly difficult because of low water resources and poor soil quality – direct impacts of climate change. The women of the community were using fertiliser to help grow the crops, but this was expensive.

EcoSan latrines do not need water to operate and the waste can be completely composted to organic manure for farming. Together with the families, who invested materials for the new latrines, we created a sustainable solution to sanitation and fertiliser, changing lives in this climate-stricken landscape.

Turning election promises into action in Nigeria

Launched in July, our four-year ‘Keep Your Promises’ campaign calling on officials to honour pledges made during the February 2019 general election had a huge impact. It led to substantially increased state budgets for water, sanitation and hygiene. In Plateau, for example, the budget increased by almost £24 million.

And Bauchi State commissioned 700 new boreholes, refurbished 800 boreholes and provided 64 non-contact handwashing stations in healthcare centres. The State Governor also pledged to end open defecation.

Plateau State set up a State Water Council to ensure water, sanitation and health are effectively addressed and monitored. The number of staff trained in water, sanitation and hygiene increased in all 17 local government areas.

Together with civil society organisations, we trained people to harness traditional media, social media and public meetings to engage state leaders and hold them to account. We also ran ‘know your rights’ training for marginalised groups.
Loans promote sanitation and hygiene in Rwanda

More than 7,000 households used micro loans to buy sanitation and hygiene products including toilet slabs, tippy-taps and soap after we advised the local government and the savings and credit cooperative to offer the loans for the first time. We then worked together to enable people on low incomes to take out the very low interest loans.

The right tool for the job in Zambia

At the 72nd World Health Assembly in May, the World Health Organization (WHO) passed unanimously a groundbreaking resolution, which we had campaigned hard for: to improve WASH in healthcare facilities. By September, we had supported the Government of Zambia and other partners to organise a global commitment-making event in the capital, Lusaka. We then worked with the Government to establish national standards and develop a tool to assess the state of WASH in healthcare facilities. The tool is a guide for monitoring conditions and identifying areas for improvement, and has already been used in six out of ten provinces.

We are now working hard to ensure other Health Assembly member states take swift action to implement their commitments, through developing national roadmaps, setting and monitoring targets, increasing investment in infrastructure and human resources and strengthening systems.

Members of our global delegation to the World Health Assembly.

Women wash their hands as they arrive at Diaramana Health Centre, Segou region, Mali – the WHO decision to improve WASH in healthcare facilities, that we worked so hard to secure, will make a lasting difference to people’s lives.
Setting standards in Malawi

Setting appropriate national and global standards is a huge step towards securing improved WASH benefits for large numbers of people. In Malawi, we worked tirelessly to successfully influence three new standards: the national Sanitation and Hygiene Policy (which before our intervention was called the Sanitation Policy, and included little on essential hygiene behaviour change); the national Infection Prevention and Control Guidelines; and for the Ministry of Health to support passing the World Health Assembly resolution on WASH in healthcare facilities during the World Health Organization and UNICEF global meeting in Zambia.

Enabling the environment for people with disabilities

In Madagascar, we began a project to help 600 people living with disabilities in three regions – Bongolava, Analamanga and Alaotra Mangoro. The aim is to create an enabling environment so that people can benefit from clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene.

Despite several challenges that delayed the project’s start, to ensure the quality and sustainability of the project’s outcomes we ran training on equity and inclusion with our partner, Platform of Federations of Persons with Disabilities (PFPH), and the Ministry of Population, and launched a knowledge management study to reinforce PFPH’s capacity.

Irene, pictured left: “I am so happy for the children in my village now, because even though some of them are physically disabled, they are able to keep studying because almost every school in our commune has running water and nice, adapted toilets for them.”
Securing services in the Kingdom of eSwatini

A declining economy resulted in the Kingdom of eSwatini’s Government cutting the budget for sanitation and hygiene work to nothing. Against this backdrop we supported the Department of Water Affairs with technical guidance to develop a reporting and information management system to monitor how well community water points are functioning. This is critical to sustain water services long into the future, and, having set up the system, we are now advocating that it be used nationally.

Ntsika (right) on his way home with a bucket of water in Ka-Ben, Lubombo Province: “I walk down to the river with my sisters. The borehole broke a year ago. Our health has changed since using the water from the river. My sister has something like ringworms.”

Helping millions become open defecation free in Pakistan

In November, Muzaffargarh became the first district in Pakistan to be declared open defecation free. After the country’s 2018 Clean Green Pakistan initiative, the local government accelerated action to bring safe sanitation to the district’s 4.3 million people.

Together with partners Agahe Pakistan and the Public Health Engineering Department, we helped to build 1,400 latrines in the district over a seven-year period.

Through our partnerships, we covered 644 out of a total of 728 villages in the district. We also provided water supply schemes, toilets and hygiene education in 266 schools, including constructing female-friendly toilets in 60 schools. Further, we influenced communities to take the lead in building more latrines; through this work, another 80,000 were constructed.

The end of open defecation marks a positive change for people in Muzaffargarh and is the first step in Pakistan’s journey to becoming an open defecation free country.

Khizar Hayat fetching water from a WaterAid-installed ultra-filtration plant in the village of Basti Ghareeb Abad, Muzaffargarh; Washing hands in Muzaffargarh.
Claiming rights in Delhi, India

Thank to Empowerment for Rehabilitation Academic & Health (EFRAH), our local partner NGO, and funders Altico Capital India Ltd, 1,000 people in Raghubir Nagar R block in West Delhi now have access to clean water. Together, we supported the community to organise meetings and write letters to demand that the local authorities fulfil their human rights to water.

Community members secured land for a water tank and stand pipe to serve 200 households, ensuring the Delhi Government water agency’s portable tanker would come twice a day to supply it. The community has been closely involved in making the project sustainable, including forming a youth WASH committee who were trained to test water quality using field testing kits, and have been championing WASH awareness.

To enable people to enjoy the full benefits of access to water, community mobilisers also motivated households to maintain healthy hygiene practices. Their work included monthly sessions with adolescent girls and pregnant women about menstrual hygiene management and myths. Following similar sessions in Raghubir Nagar E block, girls have gradually begun breaking period taboos such as avoiding eating pickles and entering temple or the kitchen while menstruating.

Supporting safer births in Myanmar

This year, we continued our five-year programme with the Australian Government to support safer births in Myanmar, funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade’s Water for Women programme and WaterAid UK. By improving water, sanitation and hygiene alongside infection prevention and control in five hospitals in the Ayeryawady region, the project aims to improve the quality and safety of healthcare for mothers and babies at birth.

One focus this year was to ensure hospital cleaners receive practical training in hygiene and cleaning in healthcare settings, including essential infection and prevention control. Our partners the Soapbox Collaborative developed a training package and worked with us to contextualise and deliver it, using locally sourced cleaning products. 58 cleaning staff across the hospitals learned about hand hygiene, protective equipment, managing waste, housekeeping and environmental cleaning.

15 nurses from each healthcare facility received expanded training to equip them to train cleaners, ensuring sustainable transfer of knowledge and practical skills, and supportive supervision within the hospital setting.
Planning for improved sanitation in Papua New Guinea

In Papua New Guinea, funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade’s Water for Women, we worked with The Wewak District Development Authority to develop a five-year plan outlining the WASH development priorities for the district’s five rural and one urban Local Level Governments. The work will support communities to become open defecation free, which would make Wewak the first such district in Papua New Guinea.

We led a detailed baseline assessment of WASH conditions, a study on gender equality and social inclusion, and several workshops to review data and develop plans that were specific to the district’s needs. The five-year plan provides a roadmap for investing in WASH and accelerating improvements, for all levels of government, NGOs, politicians and communities in the district, encouraging collaborative action towards sustainable change.

Adapting to environmental change in Karnataka, India

Through our partner Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement (SVYM), we improved the water supply for 196 people in Machonayakanahalli village after climate change, industry and land use reduced the groundwater level from 200–300 feet to 1,200–1,500 feet over a decade. This had left villagers facing huge challenges finding water, especially during summer, because the Government borewell next to the nearby lake was not deep enough to operate for more than a few months each year after the monsoon.

SVYM drilled a new, deeper borewell, built a rainwater harvesting structure in the Government Lower Primary School; increased the underground storage tank to hold 5,000 litres; built recharge pits and a handwashing unit; and repaired the pipeline connection to the borewell water supply. “Now there is enough water for children, kitchen, as well as the school garden,” said the headmaster.

To create the plan, we lead a detailed baseline assessment of WASH conditions throughout the district.

A teacher shows pupils how to wash their hands properly, at Machonayakanahalli’s Primary School, Karnataka, India.
Our partnerships

Clean water for 50,000 people in Arusha, Tanzania

In April we delivered our most ambitious project yet in Tanzania: a water supply for more than 50,000 people in five villages. The new solar-powered water treatment facility pumps and purifies contaminated groundwater using several innovations, including the biggest fluoride treatment system in the country, and prepaid meters to make user fees transparent.

The UK Department for International Development-funded project was in partnership with Arusha District Council, Nelson Mandela University, eWATERpay LTD and local NGO Tumaini Jipya. Together with the Government, we will continue supporting the local utility to make the most of this new technology.

Gender justice: keeping girls in school in Timor Leste and Papua New Guinea

With Marie Stopes International Australia we are working on an integrated health and WASH project, aiming to help girls in Timor Leste and Papua New Guinea stay in school by improving menstrual health and reducing unintended pregnancies. A second strand of the project is to strengthen women-led businesses, via the manufacture of accessible hygiene products.

This year, together we continued to pilot new resources and strategies, and conducted research to develop cross-sectoral, evidence-based approaches to improving access to female-friendly WASH facilities, menstrual products, education and reproductive health services.

So far the project has improved awareness among 40,044 girls, boys and adults of sexual and reproductive health and rights, and of menstrual health practices. 1,710 students are now accessing WASH facilities at school that enable them to manage their periods safely. And, with our support, local small businesses have sold more than 1,400 locally produced, reusable menstrual health materials.

Work in Timor-Leste focused on supporting children and young people to learn about menstrual health and have better access to WASH in schools. Our team created innovative ways to engage young people, such as phone hotlines and youth corners set up in rural areas, where young people can ask questions.

In Papua New Guinea, we supported the Government to develop a school curriculum for students to learn about menstrual hygiene, following best practice guidelines on inclusive language and age-appropriateness, and trained teachers to deliver the curriculum.

Together with our partners, we have a bigger impact. Here are just eight examples of our partnerships with governments, businesses and civil society organisations across the world.
System strengthening with H&M Foundation in Cambodia

Our five-year Sustainable Wash (SusWASH) Programme, funded by the H&M Foundation, works to promote sustainable WASH services at scale across five countries through strengthening the systems and processes that support them, while ensuring services are designed and delivered for the poorest and most marginalised people. In Cambodia, our WASH campaigns in Kampong Chhnang province as part of SusWASH have contributed to more than 44,500 people gaining access to household sanitation services – 17,073 in the past year.

Earlier in the project we formed WASH committees in each district where we work, bringing together relevant Government departments and leaders to develop district-wide plans and build the skills and knowledge of district WASH and non-WASH actors. Through these partnerships, in 2019–20 we implemented an innovative behaviour change campaign, using key local trusted sources such as monks and religious leaders to reach as many people as possible with messages about WASH, handwashing with soap and the importance of using a toilet.

We trained local elected leaders in skills such as problem solving, public speaking and planning. They then used their new skills to promote WASH behaviour change, competing to see who could encourage the most households to construct new toilets. These competitions inspired more than 4,800 households to build new toilets.

We continued a participatory storytelling programme we began in 2018–19, to engage, train and empower representatives from marginalised groups to help their communities to discuss, document and share their WASH situation, barriers and aspirations, and advocate better services. The groups included people with chronic illness, older people, LGBTIQ people and people living in flood- or drought-prone areas.

Because women’s participation in the WASH sector in Cambodia is still low compared to men’s, especially in decision-making positions, we ran gender dialogue discussions among men and women in the district WASH committees. And we collaborated with local NGO Centre for Sustainable Water to develop a leadership training curriculum for female government staff at district and provincial levels.
Eradicating undernutrition with Action Against Hunger and the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement

We joined more than 1,000 participants in November for the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) global meeting, hosted in Nepal. We ran a session together with our partner, SUN Movement, and collaborated with Action Against Hunger to conduct research in Madagascar, Cambodia and Ethiopia to reveal opportunities for integrating nutrition and WASH. Our research is essential in an area with limited studies, providing the practical steps governments and development partners can take to help eradicate undernutrition and child stunting in these communities.

Building capacities in Burkina Faso, with Sida

Local officials in Burkina Faso are now better equipped to manage WASH services, and to do so following a human rights-based approach, thanks to our work funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). With support from the Directorate General of Drinking Water, we ran two training sessions on communal project management of drinking water, hygiene and sanitation services, and on the human rights-based approach. The sessions developed skills among 68 key stakeholders including mayors, deputy mayors, general secretaries of municipalities, municipal technicians in charge of water and sanitation issues, and agents of technical services in charge of education, health, water and sanitation.

Training covered topics including legal frameworks; challenges and principles of project management of municipal drinking water and sanitation services; key stages in project cycles; the role of different actors and interrelationships in the implementation of municipal WASH projects; the foundations and principles of human rights to water and sanitation; and the roles and responsibilities of actors in promoting the human rights-based approach.
Shining a spotlight on sanitation workers with ILO, WHO and the World Bank

To mark the World Toilet Day 2019 theme of ‘Leaving no one behind’, we collaborated with the World Bank, International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). We brought together research, stories and case studies in the form of the most extensive global report on sanitation workers to date.

Our research showed that very few developing countries have adequate safety measures and guidelines in place to protect sanitation workers, who are often informal workers and unprotected by laws or labour rights. They operate in hazardous conditions with little or no protective equipment, risking their health and lives to carry out this essential work.

Our aim was to highlight this hidden issue and give sanitation workers a voice. We launched an interactive exhibition of stories – ‘Sanitation work: Look deeper’ – to give insight into the lives of some of the most marginalised and forgotten groups in society.

Our work gained worldwide media coverage and engagement across social media platforms, shining the spotlight on the plight of these workers and highlighting the need for change. We will continue to work closely with our partners, to close knowledge gaps and hold governments to account for the lack of policy and guidelines in place for these essential workers who are key to progress towards improving sanitation.
A worldwide partnership with WWF, Earthwatch and HSBC

2019 marked the end of the eight-year HSBC Water Programme, a truly global collaboration to change lives for good. The project combined the expertise of HSBC, Earthwatch, WaterAid and WWF in a holistic approach to tackling the water crisis – from protecting natural sources and vital ecosystems, to helping communities claim their rights to clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene.

Through this collective effort, we brought clean water to 1.72 million people and decent toilets to 2.7 million, and improved hygiene for 3.5 million across six focus countries. During the project’s final phase in 2017–19, we reached more than 250 health centres in India with clean water and hygiene facilities. And in Bangladesh, we developed community-led reverse osmosis plants serving more than 35,000 people to tackle local water scarcity.

In Nigeria, we trained more than 500 community members and duty bearers in human rights to clean water and decent toilets through education outreach and advocacy. In the Upper West Region of Ghana, where increasingly severe wet seasons are impacting on fresh water, we created a solar powered water system for 9,439 people. New taps and toilets in nine schools across Nepal’s Kavre district are improving attendance, health and education. And in Pakistan, 3,000 students learned good water, sanitation and hygiene behaviours, and more than 7,000 girls were empowered to manage their periods safely.

Thank you to HSBC and all our partners in this incredible programme – together we have made a bigger, lasting difference. We will continue to work with HSBC on water sustainability and the wellbeing of workers in the apparel sector across India and Bangladesh.

Shila Bawali and Suchitra Biswas at the reverse osmosis plant in Dakope, Bangladesh.
Transforming life in three cities in Pakistan with PepsiCo

We launched a project with the support of PepsiCo US to bring transformational change to the urban communities of Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad in Pakistan. This three-year initiative will focus on delivering sustainable and clean drinking water to 40,000 people in targeted communities, healthcare facilities and schools. We will establish community-level institutions, and train service providers to ensure they properly operate and maintain the water supply facilities that the project establishes. We have now completed the first year of implementation in the district of Lahore, reaching 15,211 people with clean water.

Kausar Parveen, who uses the filtration plant, in her rickshaw.
Finances

Global income 2015-20
From 2015–16 to 2019–20 our income grew from £94 million to £112 million.

Global expenditure
61% of our spend went to programmes and policy; 26% to fundraising and communications; and 13% to central functions.

These summary accounts are based on audited accounts for each federation member. Please see each member’s annual report for details.

Visit wateraid.org/how-were-run
Front cover: (Top down)

- Mariam Pograwa, standing at the perimeter of the women’s market garden in the village of Zabendella, in the commune of Tenkodogo, in the Centre-East region, Burkina Faso.
- An existing borehole that will be used as a source for an upcoming water project. Water will be pumped up to central tanks using solar power, through piping that will be laid in the trench visible, in Ka-Ben, Lubombo Province, eSwatini.
- (L-R) Samrakshya, Manisha, and Dilasha, showing their clean hands in Kushadevi, Kavre, Nepal.

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