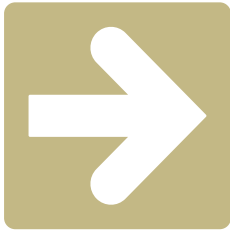


# Flexible funding

Your support  
changing lives  
2020/21



**WaterAid**



**WaterAid is determined to make clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene normal for everyone everywhere within a generation. By tackling these three essentials in ways that last, people can change their lives for good.**

A grayscale photograph of a hand with the index, middle, and ring fingers extended upwards, representing the number three. The hand is positioned centrally in the background.

**One vision.  
Three goals.**

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◀ "We no longer have to fetch water for our school from far away and we no longer drink dirty water from the river." Lucie, with classmates, Saiah and Ruffin, Analamanga region, Madagascar (May 2018).

# We are WaterAid



## Everyone, everywhere

Since we started in 1981 – founded by the UK water industry – we've remained resolutely focused on tackling the three essentials that transform people's lives: clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene. Without all three, people can't live dignified, healthy lives. With all three, they can unlock their potential, break free from poverty, and change their lives for good. Children grow up healthy and strong, women and men get to earn a living, whole communities start to thrive.

## Our work

We work in 26 countries around the world and have federation members in seven countries: Australia, Canada, India, Japan, Sweden, the UK and USA, who deliver a variety of fundraising and programme management.

**Today, 771 million people – that's 1 in 10 – don't have clean water close to home. More than one in five – 1.7 billion people – don't have a decent toilet of their own<sup>1</sup>.**

Our focus is on those hardest to reach and so often left behind in national policies on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH): those living in extreme poverty, women and girls, children and young people, older people, people with disabilities, and remote communities. Lacking money or status, these groups are excluded from discussions, not heard, understood or prioritised by decision-makers.

But does this remove their human rights? No. And our supporters agree.

## Changing lives for good

Together, we've not only transformed millions of lives in the past 40 years but been able to champion the importance of WASH within policy, planning and investment worldwide. As we move towards a new strategic phase in 2022, our resolve to change lives for good with these essentials is undiminished. We have bold ambitions to grow as an organisation. We'll be focusing on leveraging our position and strengthening capacity around the world. Only with such an approach can we bring about the change we need to see on the scale it needs to happen. Indeed, faced with the double impact of COVID-19 and climate change, we need to demonstrate the fundamental role that universal and sustainable access to WASH plays in building resilience for communities; it underpins development and economies around the world.

**Our latest report shows how developing country economies would be boosted by trillions of dollars over the next two decades if clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene were brought to everyone.**

WaterAid (2021). *Mission critical: invest in water, sanitation and hygiene for a healthy and green economic recovery.*

<sup>1</sup>WHO/UNICEF (2021) Progress on household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene 2000-2020. Joint Monitoring Programme. Geneva: World Health Organization.





**WASH = water, sanitation and hygiene.**

**With all three, people can break free from poverty and change their lives for good.**



◀ Women and children wait and fill buckets of water at a borehole on Chisi Island, Zomba, Malawi (Oct 2020).

WaterAid/Dennis Lupenga

## Together, we make a bigger difference

There are two types of funding for our crucial work: that which is targeted at a specific project, country or area of work, and that which is shared across all areas. The latter – flexible, unrestricted funding – is at the core of what we do. It supports our mission and enables us to plan, forecast and respond to change in an efficient way. With it, we've been able to tackle the WASH crisis from a variety of angles and have become a global specialist in the sector.

But it's not always easy to fundraise in this way for these fundamental activities. We could be offering our expertise to local and national authorities as they develop long-term national policy or emergency plans. Or perhaps building the data and evidence that shows the vital role of WASH at the foundation of poverty alleviation worldwide. It's our operational capacity that is underpinned by flexible funding.

With this type of flexible support we are able to be agile and responsive to opportunities that help us deliver our mission.

**Prioritisation:** Flexible funding puts more decision-making in the hands of experts so they can assess how to prioritise investment and ensure that the most urgent needs are met.

**Flexibility:** As the name suggests, flexible funding allows greater adaptability in responding to changing circumstances which makes us agile and more efficient.

**Long-term planning:** Our vision stretches into the future. Flexible funding is the backbone that supports the planning of our long-term actions as we work towards our goal of reaching everyone, everywhere.

## What does flexible funding deliver?

Donors who give this way are at the core of our work, supporting us to:

### Deliver what we promise

We use flexible funding to underwrite projects and planning. Without it, for example, our country teams would not be able to analyse the operational context in which they are working. With it, they can develop appropriate programmes, liaise with local authorities, mobilise resources, monitor outputs or even appoint the staff to deliver these activities.

Being able to invest in this work and lay the foundations ahead of delivery means we don't waste resources. Most importantly, we don't let communities down by not delivering proposed work or designing something which won't work for them. This is especially important in areas where, for many reasons from funding criteria to policy interest, donors do not invest. Backing project delivery with flexible funding also means that if a source of restricted money becomes available, we can still accept it and move the flexible funding on to the next most urgent need.



▲ Ketilina Nyundo draws water from a borehole at Chilangiza village, Kasungu, Malawi (May 2018).

### Respond quickly

We are not a humanitarian organisation, we are a development organisation, which means we aren't designed to respond to crises in the way those dedicated to disaster response do. However, disasters do happen in the countries where we work, and being able to reallocate funds is crucial. It not only allows us to be as effective as possible, but also minimises waste by letting us redeploy funds to where they are needed most. As in any project – commercial or charitable – circumstances change. Conflicts erupt, supply chains get disrupted and staff change. When we need to be agile to be efficient, flexible funding supports this objective.

### Innovate

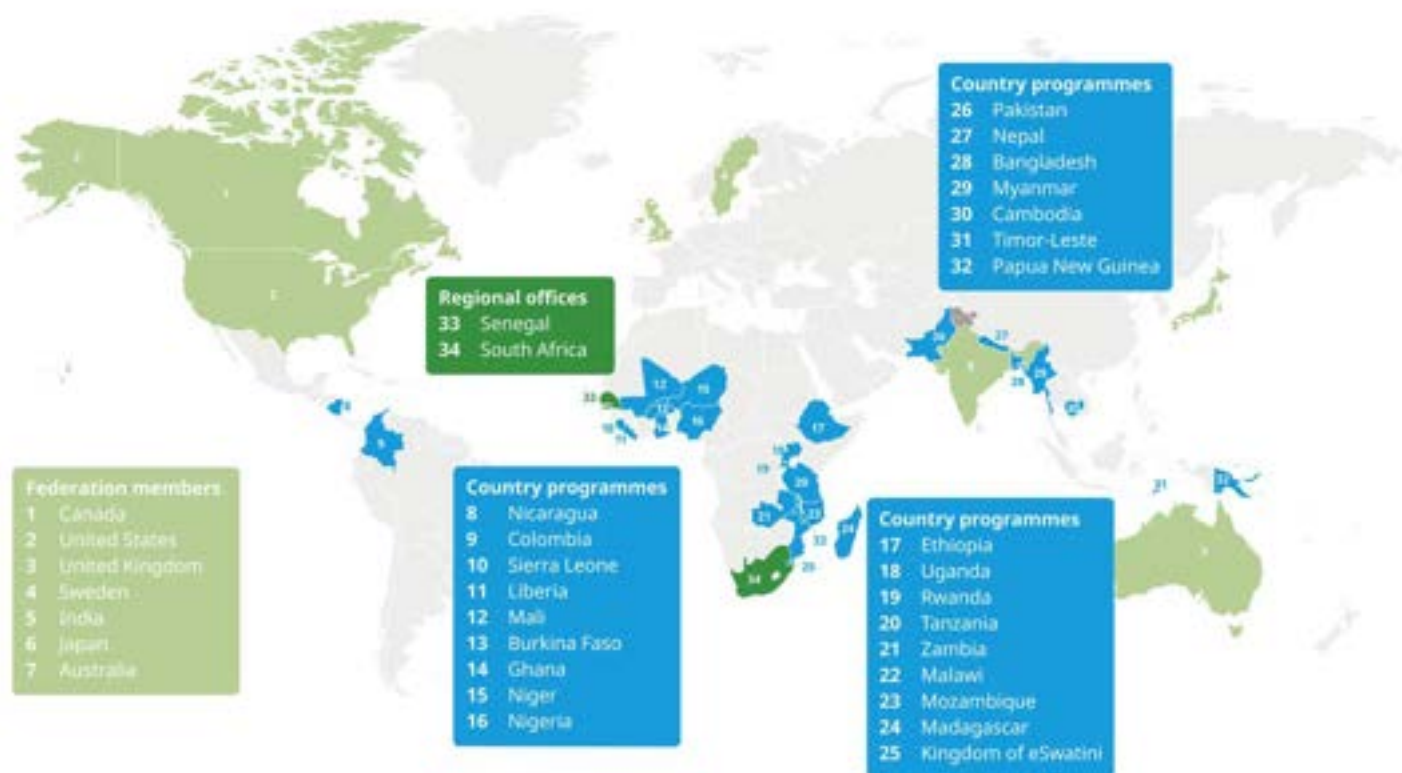
Testing new approaches allows us to gather insight and evidence which progresses ours and others' work. But while this insight may be the key to progress, it can usually only take place because of the existence of flexible funding. These often-pioneering projects might be higher risk financially, urgent, or just in an area of work less popular with UK supporters. But they remain the type of projects that push our work forwards, test new approaches or respond to urgent problems. It's only with such innovation and agility that the WASH crisis will be resolved.



▲ A member of the Benkadi women's group waters a plot of onions inside the market garden at Kakounouso, Bla District, Segou, Mali (Oct 2019).



## ▼ Global Map



### Shape the future

Extreme poverty won't end until everyone, everywhere has clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene. We are determined to make that happen within a generation. Flexible funding fuels our long-term planning, allowing us to leverage support and enabling us to empower communities around the world to demand a fairer future for all.

### Build resilience

COVID-19 showed more clearly than ever the essential part WASH plays in securing public health and, in turn, a strong economy. Despite these obvious and significant benefits, we continue to see a lack of investment across the sector. The World Health Assembly resolved in 2019 to commit global leaders to invest in WASH in healthcare facilities, for example, and we were pivotal in campaigning for that milestone. But we won't stop campaigning until we see those promises delivered and words turned into actions.

**Living without safely managed water, sanitation and hygiene services contributes to 1.6 million deaths from preventable diseases each year. These deaths are higher among children and vulnerable groups<sup>2</sup>.**

### Work towards 2030

There's just under a decade to go until world leaders have promised to deliver clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene for all. The reality, however, is that change is not happening quickly enough. We need a step-change in investment at national levels to realise Sustainable Development Goal 6 – water and sanitation for all.

<sup>2</sup>WaterAid (2021). Mission critical: invest in water, sanitation and hygiene for a healthy and green economic recovery.



◀ Technicians and masons build a new sanitation block at the healthcentre in Manjakadriana, Anlamanga, Madagascar (Mar 2020). The community was the focus of our winter appeal in 2019.

## Sustainable Development Goal 6

All United Nations Member States adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, to achieve by 2030. The goals provide a shared blueprint to achieve peace and prosperity, now and into the future. Our commitment to ensure clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene for everyone, everywhere is embodied in Goal 6 – which we were instrumental in securing. It is vital, both in itself and as a key contributor to other goals such as ending poverty, improving nutrition, securing good health and quality education.

But a lack of investment in such basic rights is evident in several ways, including the global response to climate change. And as with the COVID-19 pandemic, WASH plays an essential role in enabling people to survive the worst effects of increased drought and floods. Yet the countries with the lowest levels of access to clean water get as little as 13 pence per person per year from climate finance funds<sup>3</sup>. This is simply not enough, and places billions of lives at risk.

## Countries of global significance

We have identified five of the countries we work in as having greater global significance for our work. These are Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria and Pakistan. Each of these countries has a large population whose lives will be significantly affected by improvements in WASH. Crucially, they also wield regional, and in many cases global, influence. Changes in these countries will have a positive knock-on effect in others, so it's important we are able to leverage our resources here wherever possible, and flexible funding underpins that strategic goal.

**This report brings you key examples from across our country teams, exploring the transformational work underway and showing the impact of flexible funding. If you're interested in finding out how you, your foundation or your business can join the movement, email [philanthropy@wateraid.org](mailto:philanthropy@wateraid.org)**

<sup>3</sup>WaterAid. (2020) Short-changed on climate change: Money, water and people on the frontline.



# Finance

“Despite the poverty-reducing power of clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene, the most vulnerable people are falling the furthest behind. In least-developed countries, progress needs to increase between 10 and 23 times its current rate to meet the Sustainable Development Goals<sup>4</sup>.

“So it is against this backdrop that we have planned our new strategy 2022–2030. Great progress has been made in so many ways since we began in 1981 and we take huge inspiration from the communities we work side-by-side with every day. But there is no escaping that world leaders, investors and decision-makers must face their responsibilities head-on and embed WASH in their plans to help their communities break free from poverty for good.

“We know that developing economies could be boosted by trillions of dollars over the next two decades if these bold decisions are taken – but action and investment must follow words.

“Our work is funded mostly by the public, flexibly and without restriction. It is this flexible funding that we will seek to increase, and our power to leverage that investment at scale will be crucial. For this, we need to engage individual donors at all levels, corporations and institutions, and take them on this journey.

“The biggest change will be in how we work globally. We must spread our resources outwards from the UK and build capacity in countries. This will help us target the type of change – political and systemic – that will have the most powerful return for our donors.

“Together, we can create a movement that delivers at the speed and scale we need to see.”

**Paula Laird, Director of Finance & IT, WaterAid**



▲ Paula Laird thanks volunteers at Sing for Water – our annual community singing fundraising event in London (Sep 2017).

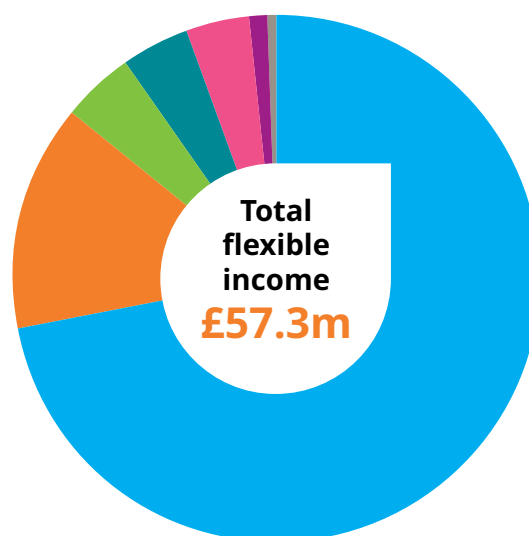


▲ Manita Thami tends to her kitchen garden in Kalinchowk, Nepal (Sep 2020).

<sup>4</sup>WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme on WASH in households 2021.

## Income

- The general public – through online giving and events **72%**
- Legacies **14%**
- Other Federation members\* **4.5%**
- Water industry partnerships and corporate partners **4%**
- Philanthropists, trusts and foundations **4%**
- People's Postcode Lottery **1%**
- Other income **0.5%**



## Expenditure

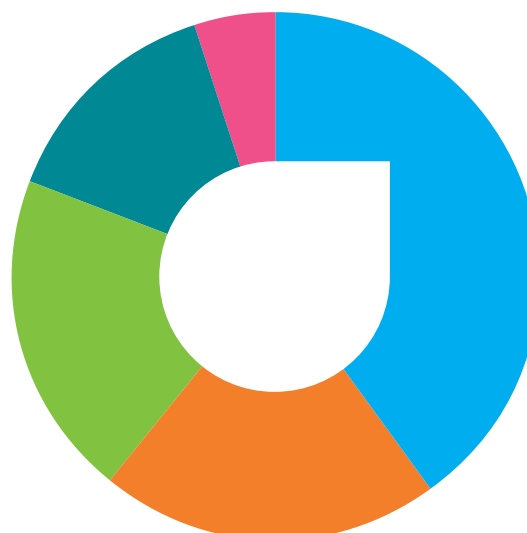


### Geography

- West Africa **30%**
- East Africa **26%**
- Southern Africa **23%**
- Asia **21%**

## Operations

- Raising grants, donations, and legacies **40%**
- Sector strengthening and capacity building to deliver WASH **21%**
- Supporting partners to deliver WASH **20%**
- Influencing policy in WASH **14%**
- Supporting WaterAid globally **5%**



\* WaterAid Sweden receives an unrestricted grant from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) to support our Global Strategy and is core funding of the Federation's delivery of the global strategy.

# Financial overview

**Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, the incredible total amount raised in flexible funding in 2020/21 was £57.3m. Donations big and small made this happen, from our regular individual givers to our corporate and institutional donors.**

We are committed to bringing sustainable and long-lasting change. Because of this, flexible funding was invested in both sector strengthening and capacity building to deliver WASH (21%), see page 24, and supporting our partners to deliver WASH services (20%).

Some 40% of flexible funding was invested in fundraising for our vital work to ensure that all the money we raise continues to grow. For every £1 spent towards fundraising, over £4 is raised.

Meanwhile, 14% of flexible funding was spent on influencing policy in WASH (see page 28). Investing in this builds a stronger foundation for WASH and keeps us targeting the bigger picture of systemic change. Lastly, 5% of our income went to supporting our federation members around the world both in delivering programme work and investing in raising funds with a focus in 2020/21 on India and America.

► **Sunita Kharel, senior auxiliary nurse midwife, washes her hands at the new station installed as part of our COVID-19 response, Bhumlutaar, Kavre, Nepal (Sep 2020).**

## COVID-19

**When we face emergencies, flexible funds provide a safety net. COVID-19 has affected all our lives, but the pandemic's devastating effects were felt hardest by those living without clean water.**

Last financial year, we implemented 59 projects in direct response to the pandemic and installed over 4,100 new handwashing stations – of which more than 60% will stay permanently in place. The outbreak of COVID-19, and our response, has allowed us to reflect on our strengths. We have learnt that we can adapt and respond in an emergency, despite not being a humanitarian organisation. Flexible funding allocation, in addition to targeted campaigns, allowed us to make quick decisions, prioritise, and act. We distributed more than 1.9m hygiene products, shared hygiene messages with more than 183 million people, and trained more than 1,100 people in hygiene behaviour change promotion<sup>5</sup>. We're hugely thankful to all donors – including many philanthropic individuals supporting us during the pandemic – who offered us flexibility during this challenging time.



WaterAid/Mani Karmacharya

<sup>5</sup> WaterAid 2020/21 Annual Report. COVID-19-related activity with The Heineken Africa Foundation and Hygiene Behaviour Change Coalition (Unilever and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office).



▼ Rainfall water monitoring empowers communities to manage their own water resources. Justine Sawadogo, 30, reads the rain gauge in the village of Bonam, Burkina Faso (Jul 2021).



### Global support

We are best known for our projects in the field, transforming lives simply with clean water. But for us to carry out this vital work, we rely on our dedicated staff internationally to ensure our work is efficient, effective and sustainable. Their expertise and connections maintain vital partnerships with everyone from local communities, delivery partners, to local and national authorities. Flexible funding allows us to keep this essential behind-the-scenes work going and takes us closer to our goal of reaching everyone, everywhere.

**If everyone, everywhere could wash their hands with soap and water, it would help slow the spread of infections in the earlier stages of an epidemic by 20%<sup>6</sup>.**

### Focus on West Africa

As was the case last year, the region of West Africa received the most unrestricted funding in 2020/21. West Africa is a climate change hotspot. Temperatures have risen by 2°C since 1950, and annual rainfall has steadily decreased. In Niger, average temperatures are expected to increase by 2°C to 4.6°C by 2080. Supply of clean water remains a severe challenge across the region, with almost 30% of the population still without access to basic drinking water. This forces millions to drink untreated water – especially in rural areas – which significantly increases the risk of disease. Drinking water infrastructure across the region is poor and is undermined by operational challenges. This situation affects key sectors that are important for development, such as agriculture, and endangers the wellbeing of more than 340 million people in the region. Flexible funding has been pivotal in making our work here possible.

<sup>6</sup>WaterAid (2021). Mission critical: invest in water, sanitation and hygiene for a healthy and green economic recovery.

## Our fundraising partnerships

We are grateful for our thriving partnerships with philanthropists, trusts, foundations, corporations and institutional donors. Together, they support us each year to reach hundreds of thousands of people. Their influence, too, supports our wider WASH work – including our research and influencing work around supply chains, product sustainability and workers' rights. Together this expands our reach and raises awareness of the all-encompassing role of WASH. These organisations and individuals account for 9% of our flexible income.

Those that donate flexibly are enabling us to shape the future. By allowing space for long-term thinking and courageous innovation, our supporters are behind some of the large-scale change that is shaping up across the globe.

From supporting exhibitions to funding research, sharing our stories with their audiences to providing thought leadership and influence, our strategic partners' support and impact is an invaluable part of our mission.

For example, Glastonbury Festival donated to our work despite the unfortunate cancellation of the event. Players of People's Postcode Lottery supported an online photo exhibition about the sanitation crisis in time for World Toilet Day, the news coverage of which was shared on the BBC, *The Telegraph* and Times Radio.



WaterAid/Elena Heatherwick

▲ Athanasia Mukakabarira's portrait featured in the online exhibition, *Toilet Stories*, which launched for World Toilet Day in 2020.

Visit: [toilet-stories.wateraid.org](https://toilet-stories.wateraid.org)



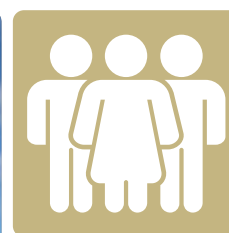
## The water industry – a lasting partnership

We also benefit from the fundraising efforts of our water industry partners, and value the generosity of customers who choose to give to us as part of their water bill payment every month. In the latest campaign,<sup>7</sup> customers from 15 water companies across the UK raised over half a million pounds towards our work. On top of that astounding contribution, the water industry continues to offer technological and systemic advice to utility providers around the world. Through their expertise, we're able to share industry best practice, problem-solve and influence in a way that builds long-lasting change.

► **Nirina Chantal holds some of her training materials for hygiene promotion in Antsakambahiny village, Analamanga region, Madagascar (Apr 2021).**

## Every individual matters

People who choose to remember us in their will leave an incredible legacy, this year accounting for 14% of flexible funding. But by far the largest amount of flexible funding comes from our regular givers whose donations range from £2 - £9,999. In the last financial year, this accounted for 72% of this income. Whether supporting appeals such as those in Ethiopia and Timor Leste, or making a regular monthly donation, individual donors are collectively transforming lives every day all over the world.



◀ **Ram Narayan Chaudhary works for the Nepal Water Supply Corporation which is a partner in the Beacon Project with Anglian Water and its Alliance Partners. The work includes skills sharing and is supporting Lahan municipality to work towards reaching everyone, everywhere (Sep 2019).**

<sup>7</sup>Water bill insert campaign runs February 2020 – January 2021.  
Total raised £532,551 including Gift Aid.



## Stories of change

▼ Handpump mechanic Baguma Robert makes a technical evaluation of a borehole at Rukondwa Primary School, Masindi District, Uganda (Nov 2020). The project is a pilot testing UPVC riser pipes in corrosion-prone areas to see how they work one year on.



WaterAid/James Kiyimba

▼ Construction workers in Dolakha, Nepal, install taps in the community in Shailung – one of two municipalities (including Kalinchowk) we're working with in the region (Jan 2021).



WaterAid/Mani Karmacharya

▼ Gita Roy, 38, washes her hands with water from a handpump in Tengrakhali village, Satkhira District, Bangladesh (May 2021). She is the leader of a local women's group and has become involved in a new water plant to supply the local area with clean water. The project is supported by Severn Trent.



WaterAid/DRUK/Farzana Hossen



WaterAid/Ernest Randriamalala

▲ Radio presenter Miora shares life-saving hygiene messages during her daily morning programme in Analamanga region, Madagascar (Nov 2020).

# Your support in action: Bangladesh



“Flexible funding plays a crucial role in our mission to reach everyone, everywhere. In Bangladesh, we’ve used this vital support in our advocacy work as we demand change on the scale we need to see. This work requires us to dedicate significant long-term resources to the challenge, to be present and patient as we pursue decision-makers, and hold our position as we make steady progress. This isn’t so easily achieved with restricted funding which may expire before our goals are met or place undue pressure on this often-delicate work.”

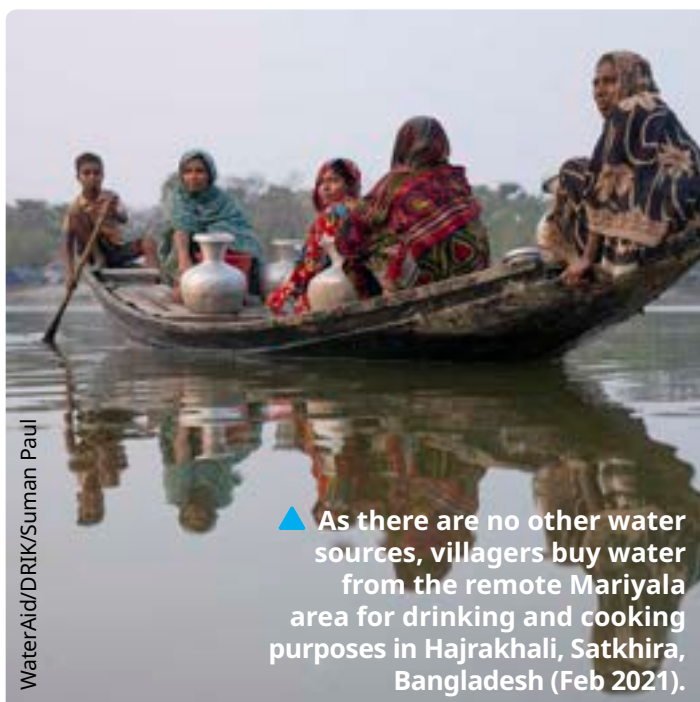
“With flexible funding, we can build networks over time but also respond quickly when opportunities arise. We need to be ready to develop campaigns with authorities – like we did with COVID-19 – which demonstrate the integral role of WASH in everyday life and emergencies alike. As we work to strengthen the systems that are essential for country-wide access to WASH – another long-term change – we can target de-prioritised areas which are just as essential but misunderstood and therefore underinvested, such as hygiene.”

“Lastly, large-scale high-value projects require match funding – whether through finance or human resource. Flexible funding provides this and with it delivers programme efficiency. This helps us achieve even more and be confident so we can exercise the scale of ambition the WASH crisis demands. Thank you to everyone worldwide who supports us in this way – you’re truly contributing to the bigger picture and helping us transform lives for good.”

**Hasin Jahan**  
Country Director, WaterAid Bangladesh



▲ Country Director Hasin Jahan attended COP26 in November 2021 to raise the profile of the impact of climate change on water, sanitation and hygiene.



▲ As there are no other water sources, villagers buy water from the remote Mariyala area for drinking and cooking purposes in Hajrakhal, Satkhira, Bangladesh (Feb 2021).





▶ Without clean water, people are faced with difficult choices to provide for their families. Here, a woman filters water through a cloth, Tahirpur Border area, Bangladesh (Mar 2021).



### **An abundance of unsafe water**

Bangladesh's geography and climate pose significant challenges to universal access to WASH. The country has an abundance of water, but most of it isn't safe for people to drink. In the north, arsenic seeps into groundwater. In the south, seawater from the coast infiltrates water sources and makes them undrinkable, too.

A lack of decent toilets and treatment plants means that raw sewage can contaminate people's water sources. Heavy monsoon rains cause floods and therefore pollute rivers, spreading diseases. Cyclones, earthquakes and droughts are also common. Climate change is making the situation even more challenging – any rise in sea level will affect millions of people.

### **Together, we are developing solutions**

We've worked in Bangladesh since 1986. To date, we have 13 partners across the country and in the last financial year we had 42 active projects working with 963 communities, 56 schools and 39 healthcare facilities. We have four programme areas which encompasses our work in towns, the countryside, on climate resilience, and advocacy, policy and human rights.

Flexible funding supports all our work and makes up about 20% of our income here. From climate-resilient water and sanitation solutions that have withstood the wrath of Cyclone Amphan, to digital technology to help curb the

spread of COVID-19. But it is used especially to support our advocacy work, influencing the government and communications campaigns nationwide.

### **Supporting lasting change**

In the past year, we've extended our WASH expertise into many areas of national policy, working with government and civil society alike. For example, we've provided technical support for the country's National Strategy of Water Supply and Sanitation 2021, helping the national government realign towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We've helped champion menstrual health management, campaigning on tax and VAT exemption for sanitary products. And we're working in partnership with the Policy Support Branch of the Local Government Division to review several national policies on water, hygiene and sanitation. In future, we plan to use flexible funding to build strategic partnerships with the private sector – for example, introducing a market system development approach to help poorer communities get involved in the business and livelihood aspects of WASH. Being able to probe into these complex areas because of flexible funding helps us work towards change at the scale we need to see for everyone, everywhere to have these basic human rights – at home, at school, in health, work and public spaces.



► Workers at a ready-made garment factory wash hands to prevent COVID-19 having learned about the importance of handwashing through hygiene behaviour training supported by the HSBC Sustainable Supply Chains project, Narayanganj, Bangladesh (May 2020).



WaterAid/HSBC/DRIK/Parvez Ahmad



## Highlights 2020/21

- We installed almost 15,000 handwashing devices for households reaching over 215,000 people. Some 167 facilities were installed in public places. Mobile handwashing devices were launched in Dhaka.
- We provided technical support to install industrial rainwater harvesting systems and are working to roll this out across the sector making the business case showing water bill savings and reduced water treatment costs.
- Our sewage management plant at Sakhipur, Tangail, has been cited as a replicable model and placed in national plans ready for wider adoption.
- As part of our climate resilience work, 127,000 people have access to clean water, 44,000 people have sanitation services and 977,000 people have hygiene services.
- Our climate work developed beyond coastal regions to include the drought and erratic-rainfall prone areas of Rajshahi and Gaibandha in the northern part of the country. These areas also include climate migrants forced to move to informal settlements in cities.
- Volunteers using our 'Connecting the Unconnected' smartphone app collected vital data from those in informal settlements about COVID-19 to help early detection of outbreaks. The app won an award from the Bangladesh Government.
- We contributed significantly to the development of the 'Pro-poor Strategy for Water and Sanitation Sector in Bangladesh – 2020' with support from flexible funding.

# Your support in action: Mali



"As a country, we have seen so much uncertainty in the past few years – and while we await the outcome of proposed elections in 2022, we know we will have more change to come. To operate in this context, our team must be flexible and adaptable. Our aspiration – which can be realised with support from flexible funding – is to grow even bolder as a country team. We want to focus more on equality, justice and rights because it is with a fairer society that we will achieve our mission of reaching everyone, everywhere."

"But to do this, we need strong institutions and credible, strong systems. We need empowered citizens, demanding their rights and holding leaders to account. Only with those elements will we build an inclusive society, not only in Mali, but also beyond in West Africa."

"We have the commitment, experience, resourcefulness and connections to help achieve this – and donors have recognised our ambition. In this financial year, we have raised approximately £4m through a combination of our own fundraising and the confirmation of two major contracts: the One Drop/Conrad Hilton Foundation and the CoWater/Global Affairs Canada."

"To create such bold projects, WaterAid has matched the donors' investment. Flexible funding enables us to commit to such ambitious programmes and gives us the time to continue our own fundraising. Operating this way, we build trust with the communities, partners and authorities with which we work by delivering what we promise."

"With your support, everyone in Mali will be able to celebrate their right to clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene. Thank you."

**Tidiane Diallo,**  
**Acting Country Director WaterAid Mali**



WaterAid/Issaka Sangare

▲ **Acting Country Director, Tidiane Diallo, grew up in an area on the country where WASH access remains an issue. He was inspired to study civil engineering and has taught sanitation technology at the National Engineering School.**



WaterAid/Basile Ouedraogo

▲ **Wawa Sogoba, 47, is a member of the Benkadi women's group who received training to help build WASH-related businesses. She stands inside a market garden, Samabogo, Bla District, Mali (Oct 2019).**

## Water brings resilience during uncertain times

Landlocked Mali stretches far into the Sahara with 65% of the country desert or semi-desert. The capital Bamako sits on the Niger River and its urban population is growing as people move from rural areas. While most people live in the south, there are still many nomadic groups who travel in the northern deserts.

In Mali, music, dancing and art is in the fabric of people's identity. From the Dogon people in the centre of the country who wear traditional masks to celebrate special days – sometimes up to 10ft tall – to the Wassoulou music that originates in the area that borders Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea. There are many diverse cultures, expressive and colourful.

But droughts are frequent and finding water is a constant concern for many families. Political instability and insecurity continues and is a constant consideration in our work, alongside other challenges including climate change, COVID-19, and inequality.

Based in the capital since 2000, we oversee project work in Bamako district and four other regions: Segou, Mopti, Koulikoro and Gao. The Government has committed to providing everyone with clean water and toilets by 2030. Working alongside leaders, and with partners and local people, we are working hard to integrate these essentials into policy and budgets, especially health (including nutrition) and education, to help achieve this goal.

## Partnership brings opportunity

This year, with support from Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and One Drop Foundation, we launched our Beseya Blon project – 'A space for hygiene.' The work (running to 2024) focuses on the districts of Bla and Kati in Segou and Koulikoro regions respectively. Together, we'll get clean water to 36,000 people, hygiene to 36,000 people and decent toilets to 47,000 people. From building and repairing community boreholes to building sanitation facilities in healthcare centres and sharing hygiene behaviour change campaigns, we've been able to design a holistic programme targeted at the

most vulnerable. Most importantly, we'll bring communities the information they need to demand their rights to these essentials, and we'll work with local authorities to improve their systems to deliver those rights.

## Highlights 2020/21

- We contributed to a special report about hygiene in West Africa produced for policy makers and the sector. Access to handwashing facilities was as low as 40% in several countries including Mali, but it showed how those countries where WaterAid works were notably above average for the region.
- We signed an agreement with the National Directorate of Health and Public Hygiene which sped up our ability to support the national response to COVID-19. We also integrated COVID-19 safety messages into our hygiene campaign, Keneya Goundo.
- In collaboration with UNICEF and our partners, we developed a design model for toilets in schools that will enable girls to manage their periods with privacy, dignity and in safety. We will promote this model nationally and through our advocacy to integrate it into the school standards for water, sanitation and hygiene across Mali.
- We were one of three countries (including Burkina Faso and Niger) that contributed evidence and insight for the Gates Advocacy Project exploring the impact a lack of WASH has specifically for women and girls in West Africa. We also used this insight in our own advocacy to help influence the sector towards greater gender inclusion and equality.

► A woman washes her hands outside a new toilet which will help women manage their menstrual hygiene at Diangarela School, Dioila region, Mali (Apr 2021).







▶ WaterAid Mali delivered COVID-19 prevention kits to the Kati Health District as part of their pandemic response (Jun 2020).



▲ We've kept working with Kôrè Cultural Center during COVID-19 which creates social art that we use in our hygiene behaviour change campaigns. Pictured, previous work with them and the Troupe Djonkala who created dramas to help communities learn about the importance of hygiene and sanitation (Apr 2018).

# Your support in action: Uganda

► Country Director Jane Mselle Sembuche (right) stands with plumber Nambi Joy celebrating work completed on the Namutumba Water Supply System, supported by Welsh Water (Jul 2019).



“‘The Great Lockdown’ started as a strange and frightening time for communities across East Africa. The comfort of people’s homes quickly turned into what felt like a prison. From dusk to dawn, households clung together in fear as breaking news signalled truck drivers as emerging high-risk COVID-19 carriers.”

“The World Health Organization (WHO) recommended that in addition to testing truck drivers for COVID-19, border points should adhere to handwashing, proper hygiene, and sanitation.”

“For our team in Uganda, we needed to focus quickly on this problem. We knew the vital role hygiene plays in keeping communities and economies going, especially in times of crisis. Being able to target our work and join a region-wide push on hygiene was a logistical and financial challenge. With flexible funding, we are not only able to be agile like this, but we can remain active in the local, regional and national advocacy that long-term change requires.”

“In the background to this, we are also highly aware of the threat climate change poses to people’s access to WASH. Like the pandemic, it is the most vulnerable who feel these effects the hardest. Continued flexible funding investment is key to making sure we can remain responsive in our work in the face of the uncertainty these changes will continue to bring.”

**Jane Mselle Sembuche,**  
**Country Director, WaterAid Uganda**



▲ Ddungu Annet, nursing officer in the labour ward, washes her hands before examining an expectant mother, Nabweru Healthcentre, Wakiso District, Uganda (May 2020).

## Flexibility remains key to success

Uganda – the Pearl of Africa – is in Africa’s Great Lakes region and is home to famous Lake Victoria as well as other diverse geography from plains to mountains. Life is tough for most families and while just under half the population (20 million<sup>8</sup>) are living without clean water close to home, political commitment to WASH has been developed with a national goal for universal access set for 2040. Meanwhile, though, groundwater is poorly managed, demand is increasing, and climate change is interfering with water sources.

<sup>8</sup> WHO/UNICEF (2021) Progress on household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene 2000-2020. Joint Monitoring Programme. Geneva: World Health Organization.



We've worked in Uganda since 1986 and are the only organisation focused exclusively on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in the East Africa region. With support from flexible funding, we can be responsive and – most importantly – build quickly on all the work with partners we have already been doing in the hygiene and healthcare sector.

### Focus on the borders

Healthcare facilities at border towns in Uganda were identified as an epicentre of COVID-19 infections, so we undertook a rapid assessment of WASH with the Ministry of Health and Makerere University. The findings were shared widely, influencing other partners to help address the gaps we found in these vital services. We focused our interventions on two border towns in the east of the country, Tororo and Busia.

Prior to the pandemic, we had led a coalition in generating rigorous evidence in terms of scientific studies on the status of WASH in healthcare facilities and were using this evidence to influence policy and practice to improve facilities and investment. The work was already due to influence new national policies and guidelines, but COVID-19 brought an urgency.

### Weathering political change

Elections in Uganda in 2021 have seen a renewed focus from the government on the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and there is much scrutiny of such operations. We are a non-political organisation, so to operate during times of such change, we need the staff and expertise already in place to meet newly elected representatives so we can continue with all that has been achieved so far.

## Highlights 2020/21

- We increased access to basic sanitation in communities by offering subsidised pit emptying during lockdown. Some 500 households and 25 community toilets were supported by this reaching more than 10,000 people.
- We provided rainwater harvesting tanks and drinking water purification systems in four healthcare facilities and 2 schools, supporting 5,000 mothers and almost 2,000 students.
- We provided handwashing stations at 15 healthcare facilities supporting 15,000 people in the catchment of these centres. This was especially important as these centres saw an increase in patients as other facilities were designated for COVID-19 only.
- We led a webinar with UWASNET attended by more than 100 people to highlight to policymakers the obstacles hindering universal access to WASH during the pandemic. As a result, two government departments committed to tackle these key issues, notably the reduction in revenue collection by utilities during the crisis and the limited prioritisation WASH is given in COVID-19 national responses.
- We were among partners supporting the Ministry of Education and Sports to develop and publish a national menstrual hygiene management (MHM) strategic plan 2021-25 and national guidelines 2021.
- We signed a partnership agreement with the National Council for Disability (NCD) to ensure inclusion is embedded in all our WASH designs.



◀ WaterAid Uganda Country Director Jane Mselle Sembuche and Samuel Sserunkuma, Deputy Executive Director of the Kampala Capital City Authority, demonstrate one of 60 new handwashing stations as part of a joint handwashing campaign (Mar 2020).



# How we work: system strengthening



WaterAid/Sam James



▲ Erik Harvey leads our Programme Support Unit, working with all our country teams to inform, design and assess our work.

“All of us here at WaterAid are working towards a common goal: getting water, toilets and hygiene to everyone, everywhere, for good. But we know that no single organisation will be able to tackle this challenge alone. To ensure services and behaviours reach everyone, last for the long term, and at scale, we need people to work together: governments need to provide strong leadership, service providers must fulfil their responsibilities, and communities need to understand and demand their rights.”

“That’s why we work with others to strengthen the whole WASH system. We need to build a picture of why WASH is not reaching everyone or being sustained and identify opportunities to bring about change. By working with others to address every link in the chain, we are building the solid foundations that keep taps running, toilets working, and good hygiene being practiced for good. Having strong systems that deliver sustainable WASH for all in communities, schools and healthcare facilities also means people can cope in times of crisis, like the COVID-19 pandemic.”

“Flexible funding is extremely useful to the success of this bold, strategic way of working. By supporting us in this way, you are joining a forward-thinking, open-minded global team, driving change on a bigger scale. It is thanks to you that lasting clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene can become a normal part of daily life for many, many more people.”

**Erik Harvey,**  
**Programme Support Unit Director,**  
**WaterAid**

## What is system strengthening?

The moment someone turns on a tap or closes a toilet door for the first time is really special. But we also know that over time, handpumps can break down, toilet pits can fill up and hygiene habits can be forgotten.

But it’s not just the availability of taps, toilets and soap that determine whether someone can access these essentials. There is a whole system behind them that affects whether they are available to everyone and continue to work over time.

The system is complex with many different actors (people and institutions) and factors (social, economic, political, environmental, technological) working together. From plumbers to policy makers; chemists to community leaders; supply chains to treatment plants; educators to excluded families – every link needs to be strong to create a system that works, lasts, and reaches the most marginalised in society.

### **Flexibility brings the time and versatility we need**

It takes time to understand the complexity of the WASH problems in each place. We need to form effective partnerships with communities, service providers and governments, to identify ways to work together, to reflect on and monitor change, and adapt in response if something isn't working. Crucially, we need to capture and share what we have learned with others working towards the same goal. System strengthening, therefore, requires us to be flexible and responsive to change and new information.

Many countries, unfortunately, will not achieve universal access to even basic levels of service by 2030 unless governments and donors assign greater importance to delivering and sustaining WASH. Plus, more emphasis needs to be placed on reaching marginalised people.

This is where you come in. Our work is about transforming the WASH system so it delivers for everyone and long after we have left. And this is something that benefits from flexible funding.

Obstacles in the WASH system can exist at many levels. With your help, we influence change at local, national and even global levels to tackle the gaps, bottlenecks and inequalities that stop everyone having these essentials. We demonstrate what works, strengthen existing processes and structures, and support others to replicate successful models and approaches. And we work with a wide range of groups – government, civil society organisations, the private sector and communities – to make changes that will benefit everyone.

▼ **People gather as they attend an operation and maintenance meeting to discuss water and hygiene issues at Indira Kalyan Camp, New Delhi, India (Mar 2020).**



WaterAid/ Srishti Bhardwaj



### **Together, we are driving inclusive, lasting change at scale**

It is strong systems with engaged households, communities and government leadership that will make change last for good. That's why empowering people to demand their rights, and making sure those in power have the skills, resources, policies, and processes in place to respond effectively, is so vital.

The effects are life-changing. Equipment and facilities are properly maintained and replaced when needed. Problems are addressed and services continue even when long-term staff leave. Good hygiene habits are kept up. The basics of water, sanitation and hygiene become a normal part of daily life for communities.

Your investment in this approach has huge economic benefits too. Reliable access to water, sanitation and hygiene leads to improved productivity, health and education. It gives whole communities the ability to break free from poverty and thrive.

By supporting us with flexible funding, you are making lasting change possible at a significant scale, helping so many more families change their own lives, forever, than we could reach alone.

**Recent research shows how delivering clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene could bring returns of up to 21 times their cost. For example, ensuring everyone has a tap at home can yield \$US 37bn per year.<sup>9</sup>**

#### **Further reading**

Find out more about what we've learned about system strengthening from the report about our [SusWASH programme](#) – a five-year initiative in Cambodia, Ethiopia, Pakistan and Uganda, funded by H&M Foundation.



**Our approach to system strengthening has been recognised as good practice by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA).**



▲ **Campaigner Mevis Chongo raises awareness about the impact of climate change on people's access to clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene, Maputo, Mozambique (Feb 2020).**

<sup>9</sup>WaterAid (2021). Mission critical: invest in water, sanitation and hygiene for a healthy and green economic recovery.



▼ Members of the water management committee hold a meeting next to the new borehole in the village of Bamabougou, Kati District, Mali (Oct 2019).



WaterAid/Basile Ouedraogo

▼ The new water treatment station of Manjakandriana's water supply, Analamanga region, Madagascar (Nov 2020).



WaterAid/Ernest Randriamalala



WaterAid/Ernest Randriamalala

▲ We worked with civil engineers from state-run utility company JIRAMA in Madagascar to ensure sustainability and management of the new system we installed in Mankajandriana (Oct 2019).

# Focus on: advocacy and campaigns



► **Sol Oyuela leads our campaigns and policy work placing WASH on the global stage. Here pictured at WaterAid Supporters' Day in London (Oct 2019).**



"Influencing political priorities of leaders, working with policymakers to change policies that hinder progress, and advocating for more and better budgets – these are the efforts that have an impact in the everyday lives of people that lack clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene. Our work in the policy and advocacy realm is the result of years of diligent research, careful relationship building, and bold opportunity taking. And we can't do any of this without flexible funding from supporters."

"Navigating fragile political contexts and competing demands for budget in countries that are facing complex challenges is never easy. But the potential impact of lifting large numbers of people out of poverty with these essentials is what keeps us fighting. Behind the scenes, we are doing everything from working with international organisations like WHO or UNICEF to help set global and national standards, negotiating with finance ministries such as Nigeria or Bangladesh to get more budget for the sector, and turning policies that look great on paper into real, tangible action."

"Most of it doesn't grab the headlines, but it all makes a difference to people's lives. Thank you for your trust in us and enabling our experts to be present and be heard in the international and national corridors of power. Your support is underpinning the big picture changes we need to see."

"In the past year, like everyone, we've had to respond to changing priorities quickly. But thanks to the strong relationships we've built over years at all levels, we were able to help governments develop, implement and increase their national responses to the pandemic. Flexible funding makes us agile and able to adapt as we go. Thank you to all of you who stand by us in this way – having your support enables us to be bold and decisive which is exactly what the WASH crisis requires."

**Sol Oyuela,**  
**Global Director of Policy and Campaigns,**  
**WaterAid**



## Highlights in 2020/21

### President accelerates climate funding

Globally, only 1% of the billions pledged to fight climate change goes to protecting and providing water for communities being affected by climate change today. Our President, HRH The Prince of Wales, launched the Resilient Water Accelerator – a unique coalition of governments, multilateral banks, businesses and water, development and climate organisations – to respond to this and ensure more finance is fast-tracked towards managing this essential resource. The Accelerator will support national efforts to secure vital climate finance and will select six locations in Africa and South-East Asia to test new practical community-led approaches. Its aim is to reach 50m people by 2030. (Mar 2021)



WaterAid/Chris Renton

▲ HRH The Prince of Wales gives his remarks at the WaterAid Water and Climate Summit, London, (Mar 2020). Focusing on climate finance, the summit marked the beginning of our work towards the launch of the Resilient Water Accelerator.

### Prioritising water in the EU

We co-organised a high-level event on water by the European Commission, alongside UNECE, UNESCO and other partners. With over 500 participants, speakers at ministerial level and more than 70 representatives of EU delegations, we took the opportunity to put water at the heart of political priorities by shaping the event agenda, session topics and speaking on a panel. Through our influencing, we secured commitments to make water a core priority for future EU aid. (Jan 2021)

### Reprioritising funding in Uganda

Our influencing led the Ministry of Health of Uganda to reprioritise funding towards sanitation and hygiene. Together with our partners, this is the result of years of advocating for change. In 2019, the Commissioner for Environmental Health pitched our report on the gaps in healthcare facilities in the Greater Kampala area. Our campaigning resulted in all districts and municipalities directing 30% of their budgets to district health offices, hospitals and healthcare facilities to ensure clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene. In addition, the Commissioner secured greater authority and a wider remit to monitor how the money is spent. This commitment to funding means we are a step closer to changing normal for everyone in Uganda.



WaterAid/Basile Ouedraogo

◀ Farmer and rain gauge monitor Justine Sawadogo, 30, holds a calabash of millet seeds at home in Bonam, centre-north region of Burkina Faso. Supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery and the European Union, the programme in her area focuses on water management working with both water agencies and training local communities.





## WASH and COVID-19

We played a leading role in influencing the World Health Organization to include the importance of clean water and hygiene in the World Health's Assembly Resolution on the global response to COVID-19, and the acknowledgement of the huge gaps in access to these basic services that currently exist. Globally, three billion people have nowhere to wash their hands with soap and water at home, and many key workers in developing countries work in a healthcare centre without the most basic hygiene provision. Our advocacy work will continue to focus on the investment needed to hold world leaders to account and demand they follow their pledges with action. (May 2020)



▲ WaterAid Chief Executive  
Tim Wainwright

## Observing the changes in UK government

The past year has seen several key changes in government priorities around international aid and our chief executive Tim Wainwright commented in the UK press on both the merger of the Department for International Development (DFID) and Foreign Office in June 2020 as well as the 'savage' cuts to UK aid confirmed in April 2021. With overall UK aid funding to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) to be cut by 64% in 2021/22 compared to 2019 and country-to-country (bilateral) spending cut by at least 80%, he spoke of the poor timing, especially amid a global pandemic and ahead of the UK being the focus of global attention at both G7 and COP26 summits.

► High commissioners round table: H.E. Yamina Karitanyi, High Commissioner of Rwanda with Maurice Kwizera, WaterAid Country Director for Rwanda, Dan Jones WaterAid UK at the WaterAid Water and Climate Summit in London (Mar 2020).



## Key policy reports and publications 2020/21

Our expertise worldwide offers us a unique opportunity to develop research and build understanding to inform key policies. In the past year, we've helped make the case with several reports on key topics from health to climate finance and the plight of key workers:

- **Turn the tide:** the state of the world's water 2021 (Mar 2021)
- **Living in a fragile world:** the impact of climate change on the sanitation crisis (Nov 2020)
- **Just add water:** a landscape analysis of climate finance for water (Nov 2020)
- **Safety and wellbeing:** of sanitation workers during COVID-19 in South Asia (Sep 2020)
- **Common purpose, common future:** transforming finance for sustainable development to combat the COVID-19 and climate crises (Jul 2020)
- **Old disease, new threat:** driving an end to cholera (Jun 2020)

Read more at:

[washmatters.wateraid.org](https://washmatters.wateraid.org)



## Participation in key conferences and meetings 2020/21

We continue to demonstrate our knowledge and influence at both national and international level. Our staff have attended key conferences throughout the year, including:

### ● World Health Assembly, May 2020

The World Health Assembly is the annual gathering of health ministers to agree actions on urgent health issues.

### ● World Water Week, September 2020

Stockholm World Water Week is the annual focal point for water issues across the globe. The conference is an important catalyst for change and attracts leading researchers, decision-makers, companies, and organisations from 130+ countries each year.

### ● International Universal Coverage Day: Health for All, December 2020

International Universal Health Coverage Day aims to raise awareness of the need for strong and resilient health systems and universal health coverage with multi-stakeholder partners to ensure that everyone, everywhere has access to the quality health care they need, when they need it – in a way that doesn't cause financial hardship.

# Thank you

▼ Elisa and her newborn baby, Olivia, at their home in Ambohimanatrika village, Manjakandriana, Madagascar (Nov 2020).

► Ifaliana plays at a community tap in Alaotra Mangoro, Madagascar (May 2019).



WaterAid/Ernest Randriarimalala

If you are interested in hearing more about how your support can transform lives and help us make the case for WASH, email:

[philanthropy@wateraid.org](mailto:philanthropy@wateraid.org)

## Front cover captions

● **Image 1:** Children wash their hands at school in Kanker District, Chhattisgarh, India (Feb 2018).

● **Image 2:** Pond sand filters in Bangladesh support communities whose water is affected by climate change. Pictured, Priota sits with water-filled pitchers in Khulna, Bangladesh (Sep 2018).

● **Image 3:** Blata, 60, stands outside the newly constructed toilet block at Gibri healthcentre, Amhara, Ethiopia (Jan 2021).

Edition updated January 2022.

**We are determined to make clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene normal for everyone, everywhere within a generation.**

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