



Dear WaterAid Supporter,

When water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) are not a normal part of daily life, women and girls are hit hardest.

Every two seconds*, a mother gives birth in a healthcare facility without clean water. That's 16.6 million women and their babies at risk of deadly infection each year. With your support, and through all aspects of our work including policy work, providing taps and toilets, research and training, we are able to improve WASH facilities in healthcare facilities making them more inclusive, sustainable and safer.

Young women also miss out on opportunities when they don't have access to clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene. Managing periods without access to water or sanitary products increases risk of infection and can lead to girls missing school, and young women with disabilities often miss out on clean water and suitable toilets. You will learn more in this edition of In Touch about how, together, we're creating sustainable and accessible WASH for an inclusive future.

By having access to WASH, women and girls can live more dignified, healthy and hopeful lives.

Thank you so much for making this possible with your support.

**Statistics from JMP 2022.*



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

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In Touch

Summer 2023

From birth and beyond

How access to clean
water from birth is
changing women's lives



WaterAid/ Ernest Randriarimalala



Newborn babies deserve to be delivered and held by clean hands

Mothers, babies and healthcare staff are healthy thanks to clean water – and you

Every two seconds*, a mother gives birth in a healthcare facility without clean water. Maternity nurse, Everlyne has experienced what this means for women's health.

Everlyne's ward at Kharumwa Health Centre, Nyang'wale District, Tanzania had no clean water or decent toilets, putting pregnant women, babies and healthcare staff at risk of infection.

"There were many diseases like diarrhoea, flu, incurable coughs," she says. Nurses also had to walk long distances each day to collect water for their work. "I was mentally exhausted, powerless," Everlyne adds. "I was not caring for my patient as I should."



Thanks to supporters like you, we installed clean running water, flushing toilets and handwashing stations on Everlyne's maternity ward.

"It is a joy," she says. "When a woman gives birth, she has a shower, a laundry area, there is plenty of water... This reduces the chance of infection for us providers, and for her family when she returns home."



▲ Maternity nurse Everlyne tends to a mother and her newborn baby. Mums and healthcare workers here can protect themselves from disease thanks to clean water.

Now, with immediately accessible clean water, Everlyne can wash her hands, clean her equipment, and focus on supporting mothers through birth.

By working closely with communities, governments and health-related partners, WaterAid is changing the lives of mothers, babies and healthcare staff.

*Statistics from JMP 2022. Cover image: Enala enjoys a tender moment with her baby in Ntchisi District, Malawi. Healthcare staff, pregnant women and new mums are reducing their risk of infection now that clinics have clean water and decent toilets.



Including everyone, everywhere

Young women with disabilities often miss out on clean water and suitable toilets. Together, we're changing accessibility for an inclusive future.



Kaniz and Sumaiya, both 20, attend a school for young people with vision and speech impairment in Khulna, Bangladesh. Until recently, staying free of disease was an additional struggle.

When the girls needed clean water or to go to a toilet, they had to climb five flights of stairs. The toilets had no handrails and leaked sewage into the hallways. The smell was overpowering.

"Many of us have fallen into the slippery toilet and hurt ourselves," Kaniz explained. Such poor facilities increased the risk of disease and absence from class.



Kaniz (pictured above drinking clean water in their new washroom, and above left with Sumaiya).

Feeling valued

WaterAid worked with local partner, Nobolok to install running water and suitable toilets on every floor, with facilities based around the girls' needs. **"They listened to our opinions and built it exactly the way we wanted,"** says Kaniz.

These innovations mean Kaniz and Sumaiya can stay safe and healthy, and continue their education without missing time due to water-related illness.

"I used to think of myself as a burden," adds Sumaiya. **"We thank WaterAid and Nobolok for understanding our needs. We feel valued after receiving these disabled friendly toilets."**

"I cannot explain how much benefit we have experienced through this."

The new accessible toilets feature:

- Non-slip floors
- Tiles to guide pupils
- Handrails to stop falls
- Audio reminder to wash hands
- Menstrual hygiene box with braille instructions, so girls can collect and dispose of their sanitary pads.

How poor water access costs healthcare staff time and vital energy

Women make up 70% of the world's health and care workers. A lack of clean water in hospitals puts them and their patients at serious risk. This is Maria's story.

For the last seven years, Maria Armando (1) has been a cleaner (2) at the Mecnheelas health centre, Niassa Province, Mozambique.

In the past, she had to fetch water from a well 100m away seven times a day to keep the wards and observation rooms clean (3) and flush the overflowing toilets. It was exhausting work.

Now, we have installed clean, running water throughout the health centre (4), including handwashing stations for patients (5). She no longer has to leave the health centre to fetch water, giving her more time and energy to disinfect rooms before and after operations, and to protect herself from infection, too. (6)

"The wards are clean all the time," she says. "We don't even need to think about being too tired to fetch water."



With clean water, nurses and doctors can clean their equipment too (7), further halting the spread of infection among staff and patients.

Maria's story shows how clean water in healthcare facilities is fundamental to a woman's right to health and safety.

"Taps have running water all the time. [Now] whenever we spot dirt, we clean it straight away. It is a joy!"



Precious moments

Having a baby should be a joyful time for a new mother. But the risk of illness from dirty water for her and her baby can cause additional worries.

A lack of clean water at health clinics, together with dirty, overflowing toilets, meant pregnant women risked serious health complications.

In Malawi, pregnant women have a guardian to care for them before and after birth. When Enala (pictured below) gave birth, her guardian had to trek to get dirty water from a distant stream. Enala then had to wait for the dirt to settle before she could drink it. The health risks and delays from drinking water like this should be something no pregnant or birthing woman faces.

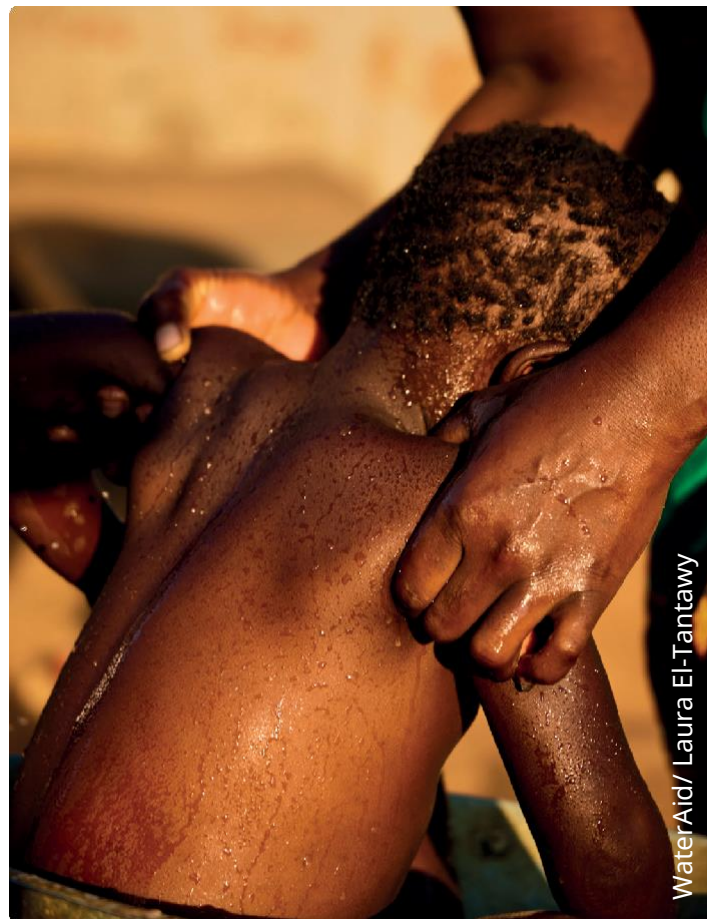
"We didn't have a choice," she says. Now, with clean water at their health clinic, women like Enala can protect themselves and their babies.

Together with the Wimbledon Foundation, we are providing clean water and suitable toilets in four health clinics in Ntchisi. Now, women can wash at the hospital and give birth free from the worry of infection. They can focus on giving their children the very best start in life.

With clean water, more pregnant women and new mums in Malawi can care for themselves and their babies and give birth with enough water to drink and stay clean.

"I am delighted to be a mother and realise that now I will always have a friend in my baby."

Enala, Malawi



WaterAid/ Laura El-Tantawy

"The place was so dirty. They didn't have enough water to clean up." Margaret, Malawi

Margaret (above, bathing her youngest child) says the conditions in clinics are much better since she gave birth three years ago. Back then, the wards were dirty and the toilets were "full to the level of not being usable" – yet she had to use them anyway. It was unsafe, upsetting, and stressful. Now, there are new toilets and taps close by to help reduce the risk of infections.

"A mother needs water for many things."

Ludia, Malawi

"A mother needs water for many things," says Lude, mother of new mum Ludia. **"To bathe her child. Every time she changes their nappy. She has to wash the baby's clothes. All the utensils, plates, anything they use for food must also be washed. There are all these different things a woman needs water for when she has a young baby."**

See more from the women of Ntchisi at: wateraid.org/uk/stories/carrying-life

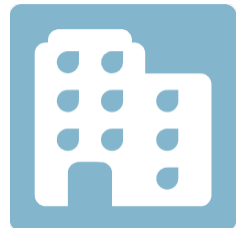


WaterAid/ Chileshe Chanda

Stay clean and stay in school



◀ Skills for life. Francine is raising awareness through the school hygiene club. She's helping girls manage their period hygienically so they can stay in lessons and learn for the future.



Francine attends school in Nkange, Rwanda. She enjoys playing football and teaching her friends how to hygienically manage their periods so they can stay in school.

School used to be a place where Francine and her friends were at risk of contracting worms and diarrhoea because the water supply wasn't clean. Girls had no access to proper sanitary products and would either miss school during their period or use dirty cloths that put them at risk of disease. As well as the risk to Francine's health, her confidence was lowered by other children's reactions:

"Boys and kids would look at me and laugh, so I stayed at home," she explains.

Thanks to our team in Rwanda, children are staying healthy, and staying in school. Supporters have brought decent toilets and a rainwater tank supplying clean water to Francine's school.

You've helped us install a new, private room for girls to collect and change their sanitary pads.

"Now we have the menstrual hygiene room, life is normal," she says. **"I come here to school and I am very happy."**

Creating a safe and accessible facility for period hygiene has allowed girls like Francine to focus on her education and what she could do in the future.

"I want to create my own business," she says. **"I could have a small shop selling things that I have learned to make in school."**

If you would like to learn more about our work in Rwanda, reach out to your account manager or Philanthropy@wateraid.org.

Health and hope for whole communities

Thanks to gifts in wills, Hanitra and her community will nurture generation after generation of healthy, thriving girls.

“One good thing brings another – this water project has opened doors for Beanamamy.”

Hanitra, Madagascar



Hanitra is a mother to three children and headteacher of a school in her remote village of Beanamamy, Madagascar. She described to us the frustration of seeing whole generations of girls miss opportunities for education due to a lack of clean water.

The village's only water source was a river, often used by animals. With no other choice, the girls in the village would be forced to drink from the river, often contracting diarrhoea and other illnesses which forced them to miss school. In Beanamamy, this came with the additional risk of being far from doctors and health centres. The girls would fall ill and be unable to access medical support.

Hanitra wanted to create a healthy, happy school community where pupils can thrive.

“There were children missing from school every day due to tummy ache,” Hanitra explains. **“Health is so important when you live far from doctors and health centres.”**

Thanks in part to the kindness of people leaving gifts in their wills, and their belief in the power of clean water, life in Beanamamy has changed.

We worked with our local partner to use this generous legacy support in the most effective way for the community's needs. We were able to supply clean water for 390 residents through three water points, including one just a few metres from Hanitra's school.

Now people in the village are healthier, girls are able to attend school without disruption to their education, and Hanitra's children no longer get diarrhoea.

“Life in the village and school is much better,” Hanitra told us. **“Pupils can drink clean water at any time.”**

Clean water is the gateway to a brighter future

Clean water goes so much further than preventing illness. With clean water, Hanitra and her community have created their own legacy. Since gaining clean water supplies to the village, they have constructed:

- a new school building
- a toilet for each household
- and a children's nutrition centre

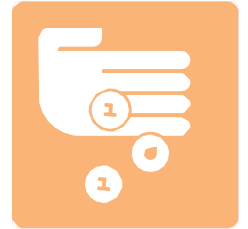
Now, generations of girls are experiencing improved health and are able to achieve their potential.



▲ Hanitra and her daughter Ialisoa, 7, wash their hands at one of the new water points in Beanamamy village – provided in part through gifts in wills.



WaterAid/ James Kiyimba



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