

In Touch

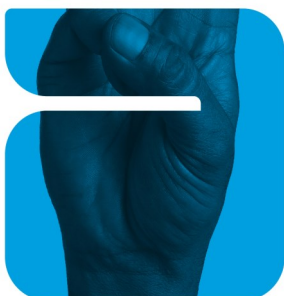
News from WaterAid
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WaterAid/ Nana Kofi Acquah



WaterAid/ Guilhem Alandry



"If it's possible to have running water in our health centre, we would celebrate this, we would celebrate our happiness." Kotimi, mother to Drissa, pictured above in Mali.

Welcome to In Touch

Welcome to 2019 and a new way of WaterAid keeping *In Touch*. This is the first of a more regular correspondence we'll be sharing to keep you up-to-date with progress at WaterAid and across the 28 countries in which we work. We'll also make sure you know about key events, opportunities to network, and the latest international development news.

Together in 2018, we helped 1.4 million more people have access to clean water, 1.4 million people have somewhere safe to go to the toilet, and 2.6 million more people are practicing good hygiene. You can read more in our latest Annual Report. Without all three essentials, people cannot live dignified, healthy lives. With clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene people can unlock their potential and break free from poverty.

Together we are making a lasting difference.

We very much hope you enjoy this update and would like to thank you again for your continued support. If you would prefer to hear from us by email or have any feedback or questions then please do contact us.

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"I used to spend hours a day fetching water for my own use... But now things are different. Now, one of the fountains is just outside, behind my house and it makes my life so easy." Beberamanana, 85, Madagascar.

How washing hands can save lives

Clean hands: A recipe for health

The simple act of washing hands can save lives: handwashing with soap helps keep food safe, prevents diseases and helps children grow strong and healthy.

But did you know that globally, 4 out of 5 people do not wash their hands after going to the toilet? If those people then go on to eat food, or prepare it for others, the risk of contamination and diarrhoeal sickness increases significantly.

Studies suggest 70% of diarrhoea in developing countries might be from pathogens transmitted through food.

Global Handwashing Day, held on 15 October each year, gives us a great opportunity to draw attention to the importance of good hygiene.

In 2018 we focused on the links between handwashing and food, since food hygiene is an area that is rarely addressed. We urged governments worldwide to prioritise handwashing promotion to save lives. We called for policy change, investment and collective and coordinated efforts towards handwashing programmes.



To change habits of a lifetime, and encourage good hygiene as a social norm, we know there needs to be a year-round focus.

We support governments to increase their capacity to execute, prioritise and allocate funding for hygiene behaviour change. And we work with them to integrate hygiene behaviour change into other sectors, such as health, nutrition and education.

Mali: Healthy Communities

Medical staff and patients eagerly await clean water

This winter, we set out to change the situation in the dry plains of Mali. Talo Health Centre is just one of the facilities that supporters like you are helping to transform.

We are now building a 10,000-litre water tank and installing taps and handwashing points throughout the health centre. We're renovating the existing disused toilet block and building a new toilet block too. We're installing a toilet and shower in the maternity suite, and an incinerator to dispose of medical waste safely.

We are making sure that the enormous challenges facing hardworking medical staff like midwife Salimata will be a thing of the past.

Operations and deliveries can be performed safely, wards can be clean and good hygiene can become a reality, not an improbable dream.

"No matter how determined I or the staff are, without safe water our role is limited. The ladies are waiting, so I cannot refuse to help her because I do not have water. Water is very important in my job, because every time I have to do a delivery, I need my hands to be clean."

Salimata, Talo health centre, Mali



WaterAid/ Guilhem Alandry



Making lasting change happen



Holding world leaders to account.

Three years ago, world leaders made a promise: to end extreme poverty by 2030. But the United Nations progress report paints an alarming picture, particularly for water and sanitation.

In July 2018, we travelled to New York to attend the UN's High Level Political Forum – and demand urgent action to increase progress towards clean water and decent toilets for everyone, everywhere by 2030. The forum is the only opportunity for organisations like ourselves to hold governments to account on their Sustainable Development Goals promise.

Our delegation was comprised of colleagues from across Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas. Together, we spoke at and co-organised numerous public and side events, gave media interviews, held bilateral meetings with governments, hosted a dynamic photo exhibition (see picture), and led a solidarity walk for water through the streets of New York.

We will continue our work to hold high-level leaders and institutions to account on the countdown to 2030.

After making good progress on this objective last year, we have also:

- influenced 14 national policies, strategies or standards;
- improved the management of water services in 26 public utilities.*

From our 2017/18 Annual Report.



The crisis in the classroom



A quick trip to the loo is taken for granted by almost everyone here in the UK – yet 1 in 3 people around the world still do not have a clean and safe toilet of their own.

Today, 620 million of the world's schoolchildren – almost twice the population of the USA – do not have decent school toilets. For these young people, it's normal to have to run home at break time to relieve themselves, use bushes on the school grounds, or miss lessons entirely because they are sick or on their period.

Our report released in November for World Toilet Day, **The Crisis in the Classroom: The State of the World's Toilets 2018**, revealed the countries

where children are struggling most to access a toilet at school and at home. It called on governments to take urgent action to make decent toilets normal not just for children, but for everyone, everywhere by 2030.

The Rwanda Government estimates that just over a third of primary and secondary schools have access to clean water. Thanks to supporters like you, in the last six months in Rwanda's Bugesera district, we have installed large water tanks in six schools and a further four schools are now connected to the existing water supply system. **This work has enabled 8,703 children and teachers to access clean water.**



This is Giftey, a 16-year-old student in Ghana. There are no toilets or changing rooms in her school, only one urinal pit. Many students defecate in the open. During her period, Giftey often stays at home, missing up to four days a month of school. This is something we desperately want to change, and with your help we can.

Reaching Nepal's excluded people



Nepal: Foundations for the Future

Dolakha district in Nepal is home to one of the country's most marginalised ethnic groups, the Thami community. A hill tribe of just 30,000 people, they face political, social and cultural exclusion on a daily basis.

Access to clean water and sanitation is a particular problem. Over 60% of water supply schemes in the area are non-functional or partially functional, and in recent years rainfall has been unreliable and erratic, causing serious problems for people. Water and sanitation-related diseases are among the biggest public health problems.

To transform life for families living in the area, we've launched an ambitious project to bring truly equitable and sustainable solutions to water access,

along with decent toilets and good hygiene.

Running from October 2018 to September 2021, this project will build new water systems in Kalinchowk and Shailung rural municipalities. We'll repair any existing systems that are broken, build toilets and handwashing facilities in schools, and work closely with the most vulnerable and marginalised people to make sure they have access to water all year round.

Prioritising projects like this is so important for us to be able to reach everyone, everywhere by 2030.



"If the water is easily accessible I can save a lot of time which I am spending on fetching water. I can spend more time managing the household chores. If I do not have to carry water, I will feel relaxed. My life would be comfortable. We can well maintain the sanitation and personal hygiene. We will be clean and healthy."

Januka Dulal, 54, Shailung, Nepal

Thank you

Looking ahead to 2019

As you know, investing in clean water doesn't just save lives. It empowers women and girls, gives children an education, improves healthcare and helps business to thrive. All of this creates communities that are more productive and resilient, helping them unlock their potential.

We call this the water effect – and right now, in towns and remote villages across the world, families living in poverty are feeling its immense power thanks to your support.

On behalf of all the men, women and children we reach every day, thank you for your continue interest and support.



Coming up...

'Life Stories', an exciting event is taking place **19 March 2019**. Join us to hear directly from our team on the ground the difference we are making in the communities where we work.

In addition to **Nepal**, we will soon start a new project in **Madagascar** working within the communities of the Municipality of Manjakandriana to provide clean water. If you would like to support projects like this, please get in touch: intouch@wateraid.org

