

Our Global Strategy

2022–2032

Ending the water, sanitation and hygiene crisis together – for everyone, everywhere.



WaterAid/Ernest Randriarimalala



WaterAid



▲ Vonjy, 10, and Tahiana, 11, during a school break. With support from Giorgio Armani's global water initiative ACQUA FOR LIFE, we have implemented clean water and sanitation projects in Ambohibao region, Madagascar. May 2019.

► The community of Raghbir Nagar mobilised to demand access to drinking water. Drishti, 14, and Rajeev, 18, community youth leaders, check water quality. New Delhi, India. March 2020.



WaterAid/Srishti Bhardwaj

WaterAid/Ernest Randriarimalala

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We are WaterAid

Our vision

A world where everyone, everywhere has sustainable and safe water, sanitation and hygiene.

Our mission

Transform lives through sustainable and safe water, sanitation and hygiene.

Our values

They define our culture and unite us across the many countries in which we work. They are at the very heart of WaterAid – who we are, what we do and how we do it.

● Respect

We treat everyone with dignity and respect, and champion the rights and contribution of all to achieve a fairer world.

● Accountability

We are accountable to those we work with and to those who support us.

● Courage

We are bold and inspiring in our actions and words, and uncompromising in our determination to pursue our mission.

● Collaboration

We work with others to maximise our impact, embracing diversity and difference in the pursuit of common goals.

● Innovation

We are creative and agile, always learning, and prepared to take risks to accelerate change.

● Integrity

We act with honesty and conviction, and our actions are consistent with openness, equality and human rights.



▲ With support from our partners and funding from HSBC, we established a Pond Sand Filter plant so the community of Golchera have safe water to drink. Dacope, Khulna. September 2018.

Introduction

Without sustainable and safe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), no one can live a full and healthy life. These should be a part of daily life for everyone, everywhere – but they are not. This is why our vision is of a world where everyone has these three essentials. A world where...

- No woman is forced to waste her time walking and queuing for hours to collect water.
- No girl is excluded from a better future because her school doesn't have working toilets that lock.
- No community is held back by an endless cycle of sickness from broken and dirty water supplies and poor hygiene.
- No one lives in fear that a changing climate will mean a thirsty tomorrow.
- Everyone can live a more fulfilled, dignified and healthy life, with the opportunities that sustainable and safe WASH bring.

We have always worked towards the day when everyone, everywhere has sustainable and safe WASH. This strategy will bring that day closer, even faster.

It is about making sure everything we do with our partners and allies has maximum impact. It is about inspiring and compelling others to play their part in ending the WASH crisis. This strategy is more bold and ambitious than our last.

We will be the catalyst for sustainable and safe WASH for tens of millions of people across entire districts and towns, supporting and influencing service providers and government authorities to deliver change. Our work to convince donors, governments and investors means billions of pounds of funding will flow into WASH systems to ensure maximum investment impact.

Our evidence and arguments will create a compelling case for the transformative effect of WASH on the economy, public health and society, particularly in the face of climate change.

Even in remote or marginalised communities, every mother will be able to give birth in a hygienic hospital where clean water and soap are always available. It will be unthinkable for health centres to operate without WASH to keep staff and patients safe. Decent toilets at home and good hygiene will be part of everyday life, keeping sickness at bay and helping protect communities from disease.

In the face of climate change, communities will rely on more resilient WASH services. We will focus on reaching the most marginalised people, making sure that women and girls are central to everything we do.

In previous strategies, we measured our success by the millions of people we reached with our service delivery work. In our new strategy, we will measure our collective success – with our partners and allies – reaching hundreds of millions of people through systemic change.

By 2032, our ambition through our work is to see:

- **400 million more people with sustainable and safe WASH.**
- **\$15 billion more a year mobilised for WASH in low- and middle-income countries.**

We will work with the utmost determination, passion and focus to reach everyone, everywhere with clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene.

We know that change is possible. It can be done.

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The state of WASH



Lack of sustainable and safe water sources means Bintu Nasiru and her family rely on water from a stream in Kissa community, Kwaja Village, Nigeria. February 2021.

WaterAid/Etinosa Yvonne

Why water, sanitation and hygiene matter

Lack of sustainable and safe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) remains one of the greatest challenges facing low-income countries. These essentials are indispensable to economic growth, as well as people's health and dignity. They are crucial to eliminate poverty, tackle gender inequality and ensure that no one is left behind on the road towards sustainable development.

But today, billions of people are denied their human rights to WASH, causing a life of ill health, poverty and stolen futures. Many others experience poor levels of service, with dirty water, unreliable supplies, overflowing toilets or poorly designed facilities they are unable to use. In sub-Saharan Africa, up to 70% of rural water schemes are estimated to not be working properly at any given time.¹

- Around the world, 800 children die every day from diarrhoeal diseases caused by a lack of sustainable and safe WASH.² **But it doesn't have to be this way.** If everyone had these three essentials, the lives of around 300,000 children would be saved every year.²
- Lack of sustainable and safe WASH costs sub-Saharan African countries 5% of their national income – that is more than the entire continent receives in development aid.³ **But it doesn't have to be this way.** Basic WASH is a no regrets investment that will provide up to 21 times more value than it costs.⁴
- Every day, millions of women and girls spend 1–2 hours collecting water.⁴ **But it doesn't have to be this way.** If all women and girls had clean water at home, they would together save more than 77 million days every year.⁴
- More than two billion people don't have a place to wash their hands with soap and water, even though public health depends on sustainable and safe WASH to help fight and prevent diseases.⁵ **But it doesn't have to be this way.** Regular handwashing with soap reduces the risk of widespread diarrhoea by up to half,⁶ and the spread of other illnesses like COVID-19.
- Lack of faecal waste treatment and open defecation contaminates both drinking water sources and the wider environment. Currently, 80% of wastewater is disposed of directly without proper treatment.⁷ **But it doesn't have to be this way.** Sustainable and safe water and sewage systems will both preserve water supplies and protect the environment.

Progress so far

In 2015, governments of the United Nations promised to end extreme poverty and achieve sustainable development by 2030 through 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG 6 aims to end the global WASH crisis, reaching everyone with sustainable and safe WASH. This goal is at the heart of everything we do.

Over the last 20 years, we have seen that real progress is possible when WASH is prioritised in national development. Since 2000, over two billion more people gained access to basic water, 2.7 billion have gained basic sanitation, and the number of people with safely managed sanitation has doubled.⁵ There has been good progress on eliminating open defecation, though many countries in sub-Saharan Africa still face significant challenges. Countries such as India, Cambodia and Nepal have made considerable strides towards achieving SDG 6, and 14 other countries where we work have made progress.⁸

However, too often, those with the power to deliver change do not think WASH is sufficiently important. So, overall global progress has been shamefully slow and uneven. Now, we risk losing the gains made as the pandemic and climate change threaten to push progress back by decades.

Around the world, **one in ten people still don't have even basic access to water**, more than **one in five don't have basic sanitation**, and almost **one in three don't have basic hygiene facilities**. The full ambition of the SDGs is for everyone to have more than basic access, yet one quarter of people still don't have a safely managed water supply and just under a half don't have safely managed sanitation.⁵

The WASH crisis falls most heavily on people who are economically and socially marginalised. Half of all people without at least basic access to water live in countries that are classified as 'least developed'.⁵

At current rates, the world will not achieve safely managed water or sanitation by 2030. To fulfil the promise made back in 2015, progress needs to increase four-fold.⁵ Unless there is a monumental shift in ambition and approach, WASH will not be delivered to everyone, everywhere for many decades to come. This is unacceptable, unnecessary and unjust. It is only through a significant change in urgency and purpose for the coming decade that SDG 6 will be met.

Bigger change can happen when the world works together.

Key SDG 6 definitions

Basic access

Water

Drinking water from an improved source, provided collection time is not more than 30 minutes for a round trip, including queuing.

Sanitation

Use of improved facilities which are not shared with other households.

Hygiene

Availability of a handwashing facility with soap and water on the premises.

Safely managed access

Water

Drinking water from an improved water source which is located on the premises, available when needed and free from faecal and priority chemical contamination.

Sanitation

Use of improved facilities which are not shared with other households and where excreta is safely disposed in situ or transported and treated off-site.



Girls playing and singing in Miangaly Village, where the only water source is a small and dirty river. Analamanga region, Madagascar. May 2018.



WaterAid/Jacques Nkinzingabo

▲ Students dancing at Group Scholaire Nyiragiseke, where we built a solar-powered pump as part of the Deliver Life project, and new toilet blocks for the students and teachers, Rwanda. February 2018.



WaterAid/Anindito Mukherjee

► Communities in Bhagalpur are affected by harmful levels of arsenic and fluoride in the ground water. The Wagtech kits are used to test water quality. Tilakpur Village, India. April 2021.



WaterAid/Basilie Ouedraogo

◀ Justine Sawadogo monitors rainfall by taking rain gauge readings in Boulsa commune, Burkina Faso. Our work in Bonam is supported by the EU and players of People's Postcode Lottery. July 2021.

Water, sanitation and hygiene in 2030

The next decade will be a period of rapid change in the world. Change that will have implications for our mission.

- **Changes to the climate and natural environment** will make sustainable WASH more challenging and urgent to achieve. Water and sanitation should be at the heart of the climate debate and its financing. The world will only be able to build resilience in communities if this includes WASH.
- **Demographic changes** will see urban populations in the countries where we work grow by a third by 2030.⁹ This will put pressure on the delivery and need for WASH in urban settlements, with rural areas seeing many people move to towns and cities.
- **New technology**, particularly in the digital sphere, will be both a positive and negative disruptor. It will not change everything, but could cause increased inequity and political polarisation, and could also create new and innovative ways to deliver WASH.
- **Growing inequalities within countries** will make the focus on people facing marginalisation even more important.

Many of these changes are uncertain and will mean a range of possible opportunities and risks to our mission. We will be agile and adaptive in our approach to navigate these global shifts.

We will also see big changes in the form and stability of political spaces, global power dynamics and financial flows. This will affect how we work with governments and the private sector, and determine how communities hold duty bearers to account for services. We will shift our approach as our partners change, and constantly adapt to influence WASH outcomes. COVID-19 and future pandemics will also keep public health on the agenda, but there will be much work to do to ensure this translates into momentum for WASH.

How SDG 6 will be achieved

As the world continues to shift, the systemic barriers to achieve universal, sustainable and safe WASH will continue to centre around five key areas. We believe these can be overcome and definitive change will only be delivered when **the whole system – the people, behaviours, policies, resources, processes and institutions – is strengthened.**

Change must happen within communities for real and meaningful impact. It should be supported and scaled through strong national WASH systems, whilst being accelerated through regional and global commitments and action.

We believe governments have a responsibility to realise everyone's rights to water and sanitation. They do not have to provide all services themselves. But they have the duty to find budgets, secure critical infrastructure and systems, and develop regulations that mean services reach everyone through public or private providers. Most importantly, they need to ensure that sustainable and safe WASH is accessible to everyone, not just those with power, wealth and influence.



Mothers get their babies vaccinated at Diaramana Health Centre, Cercle de Bla, Segou Region, Mali. April 2018.

WaterAid/Guilhem Alandry

Systemic barriers

- Insufficient political leadership and low prioritisation of WASH, in particular sanitation and hygiene.
- Insufficient financial resources allocated or properly used to preserve WASH progress.
- Environmental degradation and weak management of water resources, exacerbated by climate change.
- Weakness in capacity in the institutions responsible for WASH.
- People and communities unable to hold those responsible for the delivery of WASH to account.

Drivers of change

- Leaders recognise that WASH is critical for human health and dignity, and contributes to livelihoods, school attendance and resilience to climate change.
- Governments put WASH at the centre of national development and ensure adequate investment in regulation, critical infrastructure and strong institutions.
- The WASH sector has adequate quality and quantity of financing that is used efficiently to deliver services to all.
- There is strong public demand for water and sanitation as human rights. Communities, especially women and girls, have a say in the decisions that impact how their services are provided.



WaterAid/Tapas Paul

▲ Husne Ara Begum's life has drastically improved after various hygiene-related initiatives were set up in Sunderpahari by Efforts for Rural Advancement with WaterAid's support. Sunamganj Tahirpur, Bangladesh. October 2019.

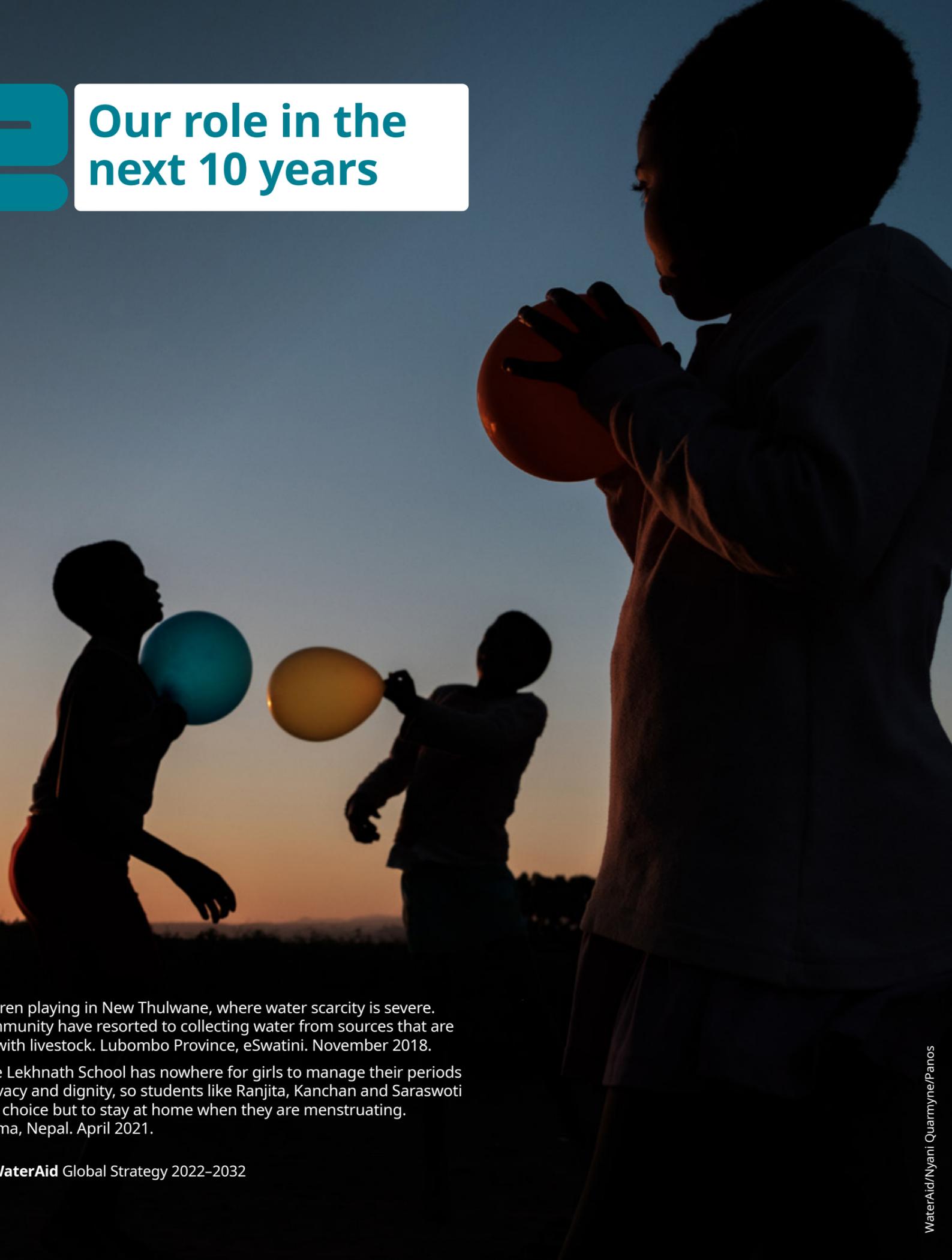
▶ Mickson Jakalasi collects water from an accessible borehole that has been constructed as part of the Deliver Life project. Simulemba Health Centre, Kasungu, Malawi. July 2018.



WaterAid/Dennis Lupenga



Our role in the next 10 years



▲ Children playing in New Thulwane, where water scarcity is severe. The community have resorted to collecting water from sources that are shared with livestock. Lubombo Province, eSwatini. November 2018.

► Shree Lekhnath School has nowhere for girls to manage their periods with privacy and dignity, so students like Ranjita, Kanchan and Saraswoti have no choice but to stay at home when they are menstruating. Malhanma, Nepal. April 2021.

WaterAid/Nyani Quarmyne/Panos

Building on our strengths

With four decades of technical experience and collective expertise, we are the largest not-for-profit global organisation that focuses solely on sustainable and safe WASH.

In the last 40 years, with our supporters and partners around the world – from the smallest neighbourhood groups to the largest multinationals – we have directly reached close to **30 million people with clean water** and **30 million with decent toilets**. **Good hygiene** is a part of everyday life for **over 20 million people** as a result of our work, and we reached **180 million people with hygiene promotion** in our COVID-19 response.¹ We contributed to WASH access for tens of millions more by strengthening sector capacity and influencing hundreds of millions of individuals, dozens of governments and multiple organisations on the power of universal, sustainable and safe WASH.

Our work has consistently focused on strengthening the systems that keep the taps running, the toilets working and make good hygiene habits a part of everyday life. Our work on equality and rights strived for the people who are marginalised from WASH to have a voice, and for their needs to be better met by everyone accountable. We have a standout record of bringing WASH to the heart of health and education systems, and our work has made a significant contribution to climate change responses.



WaterAid/Sailendra Kharel

¹ WaterAid internal statistics on direct household reach are based on our standardised strategy performance reporting guided by our Global WASH user and reach protocol.

Our future contribution

With our partners and supporters, we have made a huge difference. But the scale of the challenge over the next decade calls on us to work with greater urgency, acting as a catalyst for change on a much larger scale.

Many WASH services are plagued by significant sustainability challenges. Making sure the right people, systems, skills, designs and money are in place to keep services running needs much greater attention. **We will focus on strengthening national and local WASH systems to support the acceleration towards universal, sustainable and safe WASH.** This includes working with government institutions, public and private service providers, civil society organisations and communities.

Progress towards the achievement of SDG 6 remains significantly off track, especially for sanitation and hygiene. **We will increase the focus on sanitation and hygiene progress to bring them in line with water access.** Where safely managed services are not immediately possible, we will prioritise basic service levels, focusing on universal access and continuity of services. We will invest in safely managed service levels where there is potential for them to be sustained, especially in growing urban and dense settlements.



WaterAid/Miad Sokhin

◀ Similie developed AI technology to improve the sustainability of community water supplies by installing sensors to water storage tanks in Lautekas in Guguleur Village, Maubara sub-district. Timor-Leste. November 2019.



WaterAid/Laura Pannack

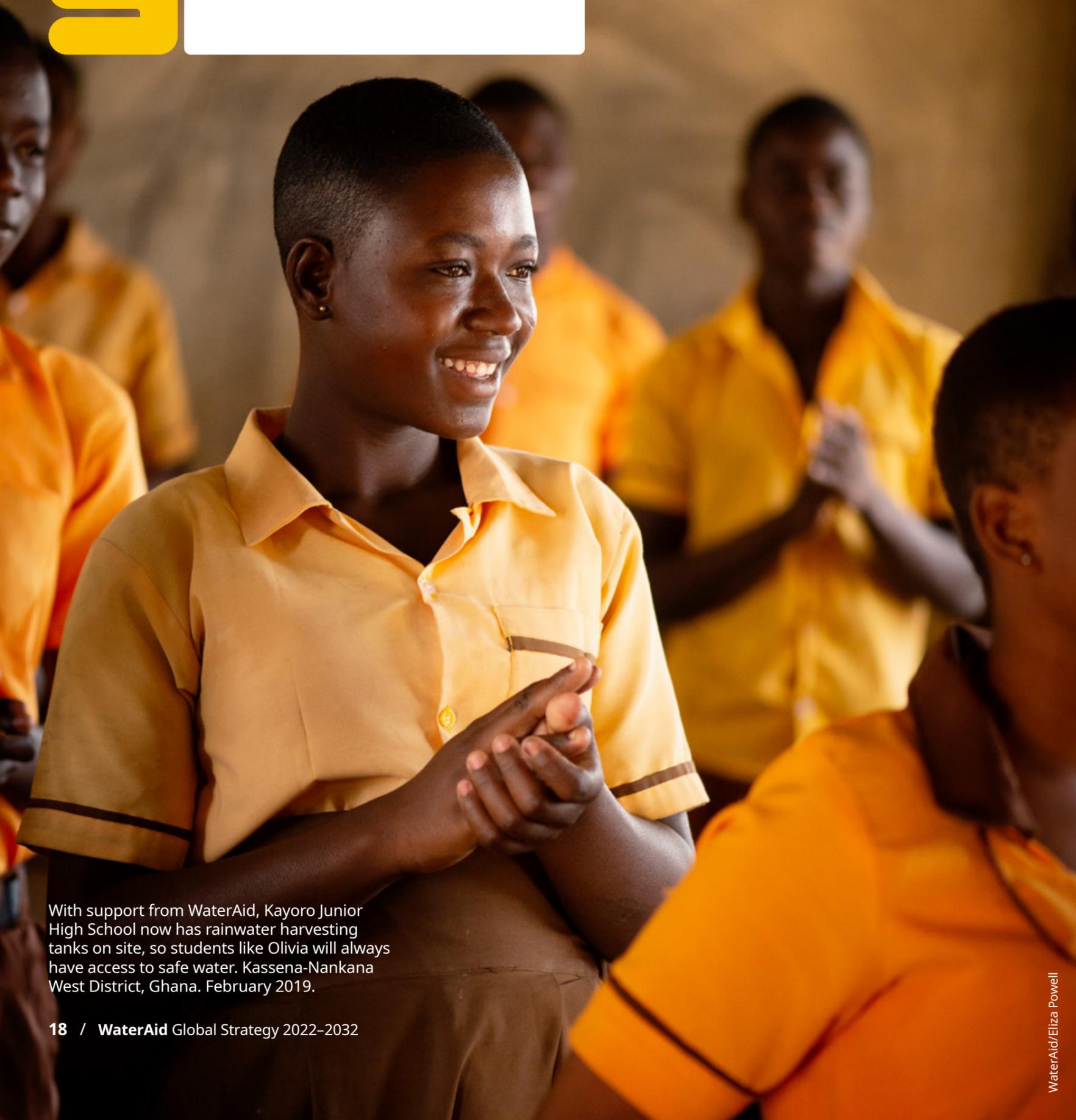
Globally, both urban and rural areas face huge service level gaps, particularly in 'least developed' countries.⁵ Official estimates suggest that rural areas are the furthest behind. However poor data for urban areas, particularly in informal settlements, means that the scale of the urban WASH service gap is likely underestimated.⁵ Growth in urban populations in the next decade is expected to be high in comparison to rural, with most of this through informal settlements characterised by poor housing, lack of planning and services, and complex socio-economic, political and environmental challenges. Over the next decade, **we will steadily increase our efforts in urbanised areas to account for up to half of our work.**

▲ Henrique Alberto Mandlate is an independent activist who motivates communities to practise good hand hygiene behaviours and demand their rights. Maputo, Mozambique. February 2020.

Progress on WASH services is unequal within countries, districts, settlements, and even households.⁵ People who are marginalised, such as women living in informal settlements, children with disabilities in rural areas or sanitation workers working in unsafe and discriminated professions, continue to face multiple barriers to even basic WASH. Seeking justice is key to making progress for people who are marginalised from these essential services. All that we do will be founded in peoples' rights to water and sanitation. **We will ensure our work contributes to progress for all, no matter who or where they are - with a specific priority on gender equality.**



Our aims



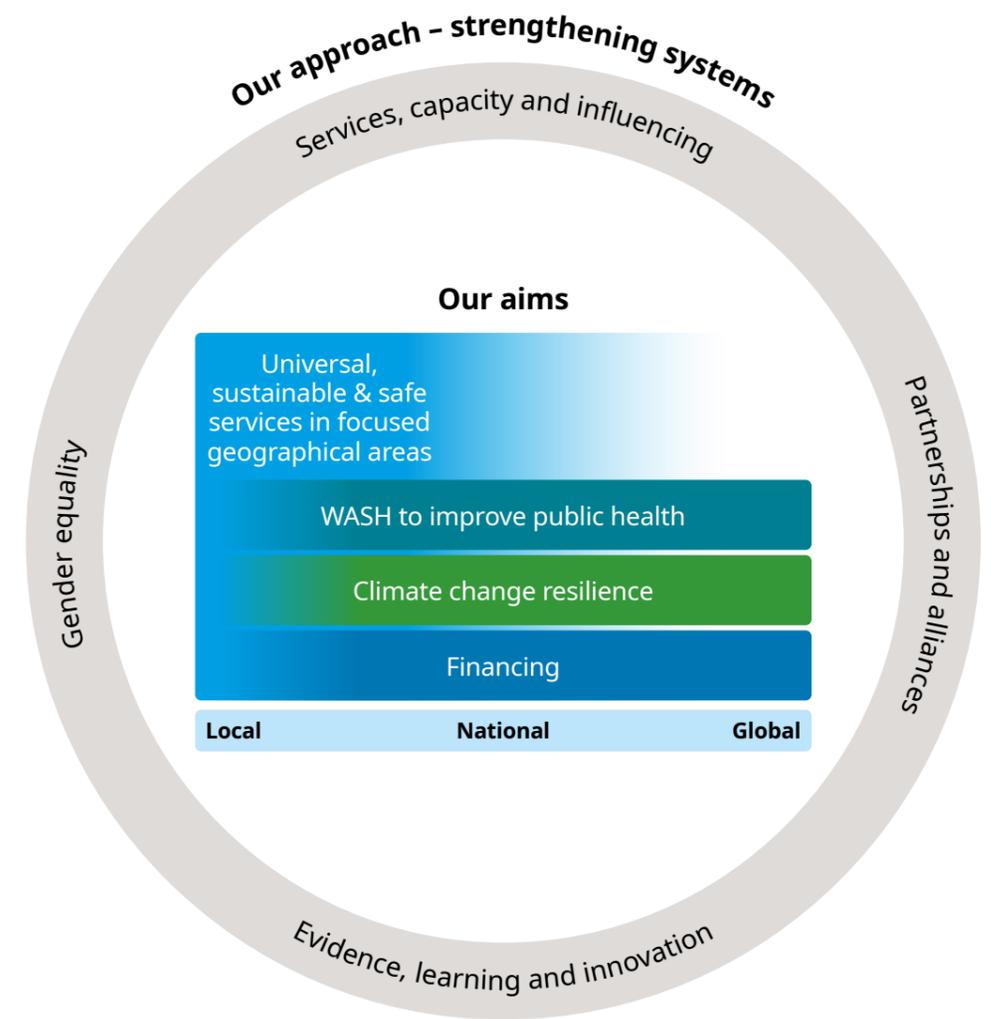
With support from WaterAid, Kayoro Junior High School now has rainwater harvesting tanks on site, so students like Olivia will always have access to safe water. Kassena-Nankana West District, Ghana. February 2019.

WaterAid/Eliza Powell

Over the coming decade, with communities, civil society, governments, private sector and financial institutions, we will focus our efforts in areas where we will have the biggest impact and persuade others to act. We will contribute to these aims with others and work alongside them to see the shifts that transform lives.

We will achieve successful outcomes in these four aims to accelerate progress towards our vision of a world where everyone, everywhere has sustainable and safe WASH.

All country and member teams across WaterAid will work to these aims and prioritise them to have the greatest impact where they work, delivering these through our approach described in chapter 4.



Achieve universal, sustainable and safe services in focused geographic areas to influence wider change

Why

Many countries face significant barriers to deliver universal, sustainable and safe WASH. When WASH is delivered, it is often not sustained in the long term and fails. The enormity of this problem underlines the need for intensive and targeted work to strengthen the WASH system in order to deliver change at a significant scale. These locally-driven, positive and replicable examples of how to overcome the barriers will generate learning and evidence to inform and influence those in power to foster changes beyond the focused geographic areas.



New mechanical equipment and safety gear improves essential maintenance and safety of workers to keep services running. Delhi, India. October 2019.

WaterAid/Sharada Prasad

How

In districts and towns, we will work alongside local and national strategic partners to strengthen the WASH system to deliver universal, sustainable and safe WASH for households and public institutions (such as schools and healthcare facilities). Our work in these focused geographic areas will not stop until WASH for all is achieved and can be scaled up. We will focus on the people who are marginalised from these services, with the needs of women and girls at the forefront of our efforts.

We will:

- **Partner with public, private and non-governmental organisations to demonstrate successful models of management and delivery** of sustainable services and behaviour change.
- **Work with governments and WASH providers to strengthen the institutions** that keep the water and sanitation services working and hygiene habits reinforced. This will include the coordination of key stakeholders and improved planning, budgeting, costing and monitoring of services.
- **Enhance WASH users' voice and representation** with a focus on women and girls' decision making and leadership within WASH at all levels.

- ▶ **Muluken Wondirad, Water Utility Manager, assesses the water pipe network map in Debre Tabor – a town that is part of the 20 towns programme to build the capacity of urban WASH actors in Ethiopia, funded by Yorkshire Water. South Gondar, Ethiopia. August 2018.**

Outcome

Universal, sustainable and safe services in selected districts and towns. WASH sector actors carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively.

Gender-responsive WASH solutions ensure equal access to and benefit from WASH services for all users. An increase in women and girls' participation in decision making, and improvement in gender equality outcomes through WASH.

Outside the focused geographical areas, an improvement in WASH services and behaviour change based on our shared research, evidence and lessons.



WaterAid/Behailu Shiferaw

Prioritise WASH across the health sector to improve public health

Why

Universal, sustainable and safe WASH are essential foundations for human health. They are a frontline defence to prevent and control diseases, infections and pandemics, such as COVID-19. They enhance the quality, dignity and safety of healthcare, especially for women and girls. Without the health sector, universal, sustainable and safe access to WASH is not possible. Without WASH, universal health coverage cannot be achieved.



Oumou Traore, Matron, has seen Diaramana Health Centre transformed through safe and sustainable WASH. Cercle de Bla, Segou Region, Mali. April 2018.

WaterAid/Guilhem Alandry

How

We will position WASH as essential for good public health. We will work to strengthen health systems through integrating WASH and hygiene behaviour change, and prioritise the requirements of women and girls, who make up the majority of health service users and health workers.

We will:

- **Integrate hygiene behaviour change into core public health programmes and policies.** Work with governments to design and implement inclusive and effective hygiene behaviour change interventions into existing health programmes and communications. Support locally owned hygiene behaviour campaigns to respond to public health emergencies.
- **Improve the quality of care in healthcare facilities with inclusive and sustainable WASH.** Work with providers and patients to model inclusive and sustainable services, whilst advocating for WASH investment and performance measures in national health data systems.
- **Promote health sector ownership and responsibilities for WASH** to work with health decision makers to embed WASH in health systems strengthening and healthcare facilities.

▶ Sokha works at the Thlork Vien health centre where the WASH FIT tool has been used to assess and improve WASH services. Chhouk Village, Cambodia. July 2020.

Outcome

In the countries where we work, the number of healthcare facilities with sustainable and safe WASH services, that are also gender responsive, meet or exceed national targets.

Governments and partners integrate inclusive and effective hygiene behaviour change interventions into core public health programming at scale to achieve sustained changes across critical hygiene behaviours. Hygiene behaviour change campaigns are designed and implemented to prevent and respond to disease outbreaks and public health emergencies.

WASH is prioritised in national health development budgets and plans. Our WASH and health work demonstrates approaches that are gender responsive, and promote women's leadership and empowerment.



WaterAid/Remissa Mak

Strengthen the resilience of WASH to climate change

Why

Climate change will affect the quantity, quality and availability of water. Increased intensity and frequency of droughts, storms, floods and extreme weather conditions will have a negative impact on the water cycle – further exacerbated where water and sanitation systems are weak. Communities living in poverty are likely to be impacted the most by climate change despite having done the least to cause it.

Universal, sustainable and safe WASH can only be achieved if it is delivered in a way that manages existing and future climate threats, and enables services to be restored quickly after shock events to help communities bounce back. Water is a shared resource and needs effective management of its use across sectors.



WaterAid and its partners supported the construction of sustainable and safe water points for drinking and gardening in Kakounouso Village. So, Mariam Sogoba and the Benkadi women's group are now more resilient to the impacts of climate change. Kakounouso, Mali. February 2019.

WaterAid/Basile Ouedraogo

How

We will strengthen the resilience of WASH services for communities to cope with existing and future climate threats, so they are able to uphold water security, access sanitation services and good hygiene practises.

We will:

- **Work to make WASH services resilient**, supporting communities, institutions and providers across the WASH system to assess climate vulnerabilities and threats, and develop appropriate design and delivery of services. The voice and participation of women and girls will be prioritised as they are the most impacted in water-scarce environments.
- **Influence investment in climate-resilient WASH finance**. Climate investment in the sector will demonstrate how strong systems reduce the costs of climate change impacts.
- **Engage with high water use sectors to improve water security and climate resilience**, safeguarding water resources and explicitly challenging those who fall short.

▶ Decreased rainfall in La Sabana means local water sources, like the pond next to Leticia Jesayu's house, are drying out faster. In the dry season, Leticia spends hours every day walking to collect water. Puloichon, Colombia. January 2021.

Outcome

Globally, sustainable and safe WASH are embedded in climate adaption, with substantial climate finance flows for climate-resilient WASH services. All economic and social investments into WASH that we are a part of, incorporate climate risks and embed them in the designs.

In countries where we work, WASH and climate change adaptation are aligned well in national policies and strategies, with roadmaps and budgets for climate-resilient services firmly in place.

Climate-resilient WASH adaptations and services are gender responsive, socially inclusive and promote women's leadership in all the countries we work in.



WaterAid/Keoma Zec

Increase the quantity and quality of financing

Why

Inadequate financing is a major barrier to progress. Many countries struggle to meet the cost of running existing water and sanitation systems, and face large financing gaps for new infrastructure to achieve SDG 6.

The tariffs are often not affordable and the resulting resources are insufficient. Taxes and transfers can be obscure, used badly and not focused to support services for the people who need them most. A substantial increase in the quantity and quality of financing is an essential condition for ensuring universal, sustainable and safe services.

How

We will advocate for increased, and more transparent financing by focusing on the governments, donors, and public and private financial organisations with the biggest potential development impact. We will work with expert agencies and civil society groups to track budgets, collect, analyse and publish data, and hold governments to account. We will use our own funds as a catalyst, bring in others who can help unlock financing, and support a well-regulated sector that is attractive to donors and private investors.

We will:

- **Secure higher and more efficient government WASH spending**, including more affordable services for low-income users.
- **Advocate for increases in Official Development Assistance (ODA), climate finance and private finance** to close the SDG 6 financing gaps.
- **Ensure finance is allocated and used in a more transparent, efficient way**, prioritising people living in poverty and those who are marginalised due to their gender, social status or other identifying factors.

Outcome

New finance mobilised globally for WASH in low- and middle-income countries, from domestic, international, private and public sources.

Tangible progress made in the quality of WASH financing in the countries that we work in, measured in terms of transparency, affordability, equity and sustainability.

Increased prioritisation of gender equality and social inclusion in WASH budgets in the countries where we work.



WaterAid/Joey Lawrence

Tiru Getahun, 25, works at one of the newly installed water points in her community, as part of the Deliver Life project with WaterAid. Derekwa, Ethiopia. February 2020.



WaterAid/Joey Lawrence

▶ Matta, 9, collects clean water from a pump in Tombohun, Sierra Leone. May 2017.



Our approach

▲ Mina's school does not have a sustainable and safe source of water, so the students often leave the classroom to search for water in the village. Khapani Tol, Nepal. April 2021.

▶ As part of a handpump improvement research pilot, handpump mechanics uninstall borehole pipes for evaluation after a year of use. Rukondwa Primary School, Masindi district, Uganda. November 2020.

To achieve these ambitious goals, our core approach has four key aspects that cut across our aims. This overarching approach details the ways we will work to drive change and bring our vision for the future to life.

Services, capacity and influencing

Everything we do will have the greatest impact when we align our delivery of WASH services with our work on capacity strengthening and influencing. Our analysis of local and national WASH barriers will inform how we balance these interventions to be mutually reinforcing to strengthen the WASH system.

We will support the human and organisational capacity strengthening of service providers, local and national authorities to expand sustainable and inclusive WASH service delivery and behaviour change models. This work can include boosting planning and budgeting processes, supporting innovative management models and improving service delivery. We will work in alliance and partnership with other actors to improve key areas of the WASH system, such as accountability mechanisms, gender equality, technical standards and policies. We will continue to work together, with a focus on women and girls and those facing marginalisation, to demand and realise their rights to water and sanitation. Ultimately, we want to see local people and institutions lead and drive the changes needed for sustainable WASH in every community.

We will significantly scale up our influencing efforts in the countries where we work and in key national capitals where we can affect high level decisions that will accelerate progress towards SDG 6. To maximise our influencing impact across sectors, we will work in alliance with others within and outside of the WASH sector. To influence wider changes, we will use policy research, lobbying and advocacy to engage and empower others to position WASH issues more strongly. We will influence decision makers at local, national, regional and global levels, aligning our efforts to accelerate change in the countries where we work, and to make a global case for investment in WASH.



WaterAid/James Kiyimba

Partnerships and alliances

Working with partners and alliances has always been at the heart of everything we do – and the achievement of SDG 6 will only be possible through collective action and leveraging the strengths of different actors. We will continue to build these relationships to work together towards our shared goals. This will see more of our activity shift to leveraging what we do to drive change with others, with outcomes less solely attributable to us. This will mean greater impact from the work we contribute to with other local and national actors. We will be more ambitious in our long-standing engagement with communities, civil society, governments, private sector, international financial institutions, women's rights organisations and academia.

We will forge new and different engagements with the private sector in recognition of its increasing role, resources and know-how to support our work. This will mean working in collaboration and alliance with the private sector, ranging from artisans working on sanitation, to large multinationals and investors, to deliver improved services, strengthen capacity and advocacy. We will work in collaboration to influence and challenge those whose actions create barriers for communities and their access to sustainable and safe WASH. We will scale up our relationships with committed supporters and gain new supporters to galvanise momentum for our mission. We will nurture our relationships to maximise the complementary strengths and expertise of different stakeholders in strengthening the various components of the WASH system.



WaterAid/Behailu Shiferaw

Gender equality

Unequal gender power relations and unfair distribution of resources create systemic barriers that result in women and girls being disproportionately affected by poor WASH. Too often, the typical modes of design, implementation and decision making in the sector ignore or exclude the specific requirements of women and girls. They fail to value or help redistribute the unpaid work women and girls undertake daily to subsidise the lack of WASH services. They also fail to take into account the safety risks that women and girls face every day.

Across all our work, we will advance gender equality in WASH for the long term through changes in norms and systems. We will actively take a do no harm approach through our implementation of gender-responsive WASH. We will learn from and build on our existing work to shift power imbalances, tackle the root causes of gender inequalities, and target all levels (household, community and institutional) in WASH. In our work, we will promote and amplify the leadership and decision making of women and girls (in all their diversity) at all levels. We will build on our leadership in menstrual health and hygiene. We will work in partnership with women's rights organisations to tap into their expertise to help us model gender-responsive WASH solutions that build on positive social norms and tackle harmful social norms and stereotypes. We will also strengthen and build on the evidence base to support gender equality action, using gender-responsive WASH monitoring, data and research. Promoting gender equality through WASH will contribute to changes for women and girls not just in terms of immediate outcomes for WASH access, but will also enhance their prospects in education, health, employment and safety.

◀ Aregashe Addis works in the water utility store as the officer in charge of utility purchases and requests at the Debre Tabor Water Utility. South Gondar, Amhara, Ethiopia. August 2018.

Evidence, learning and innovation

Facts and evidence-based solutions are an effective way to galvanise change, enable replication of best practice, foster innovation, and improve our work and that of other actors. The foundation of our work will be built on detailed analysis of WASH systems at national and subnational levels. We will strengthen learnings from the failings and successes of our own water, sanitation and behaviour change programmes. We will invest in resources that generate evidence to shape inclusive, affordable and replicable solutions for groups who are marginalised, with a focus on women and girls. We will invest in policy analysis and research that is focused on implementation (action research), and will base this on experience in the countries where we work. With our partners, we will innovate new and adapted service models and technical solutions, drawing on the evidence of others and sharing this learning widely. We will do this by expanding our partnerships with knowledge-based organisations, investing in innovation and filling data gaps, including those excluded from WASH. Most importantly, we will amplify our work with communities to share and replicate locally-led learning and knowledge.

▶ Farmers harvest their produce in the village of Neduali. Frequent floods, cyclones and land salinity have had a catastrophic effect on farming in the coastal areas of Odisha. Bhadrak, India. January 2020.



WaterAid/Anindito Mukherjee

A close-up photograph of a woman with her hair braided, looking down at a baby she is holding. The baby is wrapped in a patterned cloth. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be an outdoor setting with trees.

5 Internal changes to make it happen

To deliver our strategy over the next ten years, we will make significant internal changes to equip ourselves to reach the ambitions we have set to end the WASH crisis, forever.

Our people, culture and power

We will attract and retain the very best people to work for and with us. Our strength is in our diversity, so we will continue to build on this and invest in our people to develop the new skills and approaches that we will need to achieve our goals. The next ten years will be a period of rapid change in the workplace globally, and we will continue to strengthen our much-valued culture and high levels of employee engagement. We will do all we can to ensure our staff are able to thrive through meaningful work in a healthy working environment. We will continue to develop the leadership skills required for this next phase, while encouraging vibrant communication within the organisation, flexible working practices, and the open and courageous sharing of views and ideas.

Our staff across the world contributed to a review of how internal power inequalities affected their work. As an organisation, we are committed to tackling the power imbalances that act as obstacles to the achievement of our mission, both within our own organisation and our relationships with partners and communities. We are committed to ensure that the authority to make decisions sits with those closest to the action. We will improve the representation of staff from all parts of our organisation in strategic decision making for maximum impact. We are also committed to making our boards, leadership teams and global functions significantly more diverse and representative of the contexts that we work in. The achievement of our mission depends on us making these changes.

Katumu with her one-month-old baby in the village of Tombohun, Sierra Leone. May 2017.

Miorantsoa Hanitriniaina Raharirina, 24, in the Radio Vakiniadiana studio, where she presents her live morning programme and spreads good hygiene and handwashing messages. Sambaina, Manjakandriana district, Madagascar. November 2020.

WaterAid/Ernest Randriarimalala



Geography

We will focus our resources and concentrate our efforts. Our goal is to deliver quality and impact at the highest level in the countries where we work. This requires us to be even more focused across our global organisation, and to maximise resources and skill levels in our country programmes. We will therefore increase the overall resources in our country programmes and work in fewer places to a greater depth.

Funding our work

To ensure our strategy is affordable and impactful, we will grow our income to a global target of £150–180 million per year within the next ten years. We will sustain and nurture the strong relationships we have with our committed supporters and donors who have already helped us achieve so much. We will continue to grow our presence in areas of the world where people and organisations wish to support us – raising awareness and innovating to bring in new sources of funding to our mission.

▲ People living in Derekwa used to collect dirty water from a spring. Now, with the support of WaterAid, Miru and her community have a solar powered source of sustainable and safe water. Derekwa, Ethiopia. February 2020.

WaterAid/Joey Lawrence



Norbert Randrianatoandro, 81, no longer makes the dangerous trip down the hill to collect water. In collaboration with our partners, we installed a safe and sustainable water source close to Norbert's home in Marinjara Fokontany, Manjakandriana commune, Analamanga region, Madagascar. November 2021.



WaterAid/Ernest Randriarimalala

Together with our partners and supporters, we will work with determination towards the day when our work is no longer needed. Where the daily chore of collecting water has faded into history forever and girls know there will be a toilet for them wherever they go. Where hospitals are clean, and handwashing is second nature. Where communities are resilient to the impacts of climate change. A world where no one needs to think about water, sanitation and hygiene, because those who are tasked with delivering it have done so with a sense of duty and accountability.

That is the world that we are all working towards.

Glossary

Term	Definition
Action research	Research focused on implementation, where you undertake the research while you are implementing something – allowing you to adapt as you research.
Capacity strengthening	A deliberate process that improves the ability of an individual, group, organisation or system to enhance or develop new knowledge, skills, processes and structures needed to function effectively, to deliver their goals sustainably.
Economic growth	An increase in a country's overall productivity, measured by the gross domestic product (GDP). Productivity means the ability of the country to produce goods and services from its own resources. Economic growth, if managed well and equitably, enables improved living standards.
Least developed countries	Low-income countries confronting severe structural impediments to sustainable development. They are highly vulnerable to economic and environmental shocks and have low levels of skilled human assets.
Low- and middle-income countries	Countries can be classified based on their gross national income (GNI) levels. ¹⁰ Low-income countries have a GNI of less than \$1,045 per capita and middle-income countries have a GNI of between \$1,046 and \$4,095.
Official Development Assistance	ODA is defined by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) as government aid that promotes and specifically targets the economic development and welfare of 'developing countries'. The DAC adopted ODA as the 'gold standard' of foreign aid in 1969 and it remains the main source of financing for development aid.
Rights based approach	Empowers people to claim their rights, supports duty bearers to be accountable for fulfilling those rights, and for those rights to be sustained throughout structural change in policies, procedures, attitudes and behaviours.

Term	Definition
Service providers	An organised entity, public or private, such as a water supply utility or a toilet pit emptying company that delivers key elements to collectively deliver the mandated levels of water and sanitation services to customers.
Sustainability	Whether or not WASH services and good hygiene practises continue to work and deliver benefits over time.
Systemic change	A change that impacts all parts of a complex system, taking into account the interrelationships and interdependencies among those parts. This normally implies that the change is permanent and has a significant positive impact on how the system functions.
System strengthening	A process of analysis, implementation, adaptation and learning used to address the barriers to achieve universal, sustainable and safe WASH, recognising that this access is the result of interactions between multiple actors and factors in a complex, dynamic system.
Universal access	Where everyone, irrespective of their social, economic or political status, has access to water and sanitation services. For WaterAid, this means access to at least basic service levels as defined by the SDG 6 indicators.
WASH system	All the actors (people and institutions), factors (social, economic, political, environmental, technological) and the interactions between them that influence the achievement of universal, sustainable and safe access to WASH.
Women's empowerment	Increasing the degree of autonomy that women and girls have so that they can play an equal role in society, and can participate actively in socioeconomic and political processes.

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The community of Tombohuan used to collect water from a spring in the forest. Now, with the support of WaterAid, the district has a sustainable and safe water source and sanitation. Kailahun District, Sierra Leone. January 2018.

Without sustainable and safe water, sanitation and hygiene, no one can live a full and healthy life.

Unless there is a monumental shift in ambition and approach, the global promise to deliver water and sanitation to everyone, everywhere by 2030 will not be kept for many decades to come. That is unacceptable, unnecessary and unjust.

We will work with the utmost determination, passion and focus to reach everyone, everywhere with clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene.

We know that change is possible. It can be done.



WaterAid/Aida Muluneh

◀ 'Knowing the way to tomorrow' from the Water Life collection by Aida Muluneh is a reflection on the strength of women as water collectors and their hope that tomorrow, they will be freed from this daily burden. Commissioned by WaterAid and supported by H&M Foundation.

Front cover: Now there is access to water and sanitation in their village, girls like Alyah, Njiva, Honorine and Fenitriain, can get an education and pursue their dreams. Tsiroanomandidy district, Madagascar. June 2018.

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

