



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Improving Access to Water Supply and Sanitation, and Promoting Better Hygiene



Photo: Luke Duggelby

Improving access to clean water at the household level.



Small scale provider of water services.

CHALLENGES

More than 1 billion people in the world lack access to improved water supplies and more than 2 billion people lack adequate sanitation access. The World Health Organization estimates that about 2 million people – the vast majority children under five – die from diarrhea each year, and nearly 90% of diarrhea is attributed to unsafe drinking water, inadequate sanitation and poor hygiene. Furthermore, the poor suffer disproportionately from inadequate water supply and sanitation services, which helps to perpetuate a cycle of disease and poverty. Additionally, many people, who nominally have “improved” water service and access to sanitation suffer problems of service quality and reliability of access. In 2000, a water supply target and in 2002, a sanitation target were included in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These targets are to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and to basic sanitation.

USAID RESPONSE

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) response begins with an understanding that the challenge cannot be addressed by any single actor alone. Donor funds represent a relatively small proportion of the overall resources and effort needed to address technical, financial and governance gaps. Thus, USAID focuses on investments that yield a significant long-term impact per dollar spent, create impact at scale and foster sustainable partnerships. Water supply and sanitation projects are the highest funded category of water-related activities at USAID. In 2008, USAID invested \$300 million on water supply, sanitation, and hygiene improvements in the developing world. These investments reflect the urgent need to improve public health, as well as to safeguard water resources throughout the developing world. To realize this effort, USAID is following a multi-pronged approach in the water and sanitation sector, which includes the following:

- Mobilize finance from local and international sources for water supply, sanitation and hygiene infrastructure investments;
- Improve security of water supplies through strengthened water resources management;
- Reform water and sanitation utilities regulation, governance and organizational performance for improved financial viability, operations and maintenance cost recovery, commercialization, transparency, customer service, efficiency and expanded services for the poor;
- Build capacity of small-scale service providers;



WASH in Schools Program.



Simple household water quality testing.

- Promote community-based, health-focused interventions that complement water supply and sanitation infrastructure programs by empowering communities with the resources and skills to protect their own health; and
- Promote alliances and partnerships for improved service delivery.

FEATURED PROJECTS AND PUBLICATIONS

- In Ethiopia, the USAID *Hygiene Improvement Project*, together with the World Bank Water and Sanitation Program, is supporting the Government of Ethiopia's efforts to achieve universal sanitation coverage by 2012, beginning in the Amhara region of 20 million and later disseminating and replicating project results in other regions of the country. Already, some 600,000 people have reached the goal of no open defecation and total hygiene behavior change.
- The USAID Regional Development Mission for Asia in Thailand is initiating a public-private partnership titled, *Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Enterprise Development (WaterSHED)* in the Mekong sub-region to support market development and scale-up of household water treatment systems, household sanitation, and hygiene promotion.
- USAID is reforming India's Orissa State water and sanitation utilities under a new commercialized public operating services company that will improve cost recovery and expand services into the slums of cities of more one million people like Bhubaneswar.
- USAID's *Environmental Services Program (ESP)* covers six of the most densely populated provinces in Indonesia and promotes better health through a strong base of integrated projects aimed at improving water resources management and expanding access to clean water and sanitation services in the highest priority provinces of the country.

USAID is engaged in a range of alliances and partnerships to expand access to water supply and sanitation, and watershed management, and to improve water quality and hygiene through simple household-level water treatment and safe storage interventions, which can improve drinking water quality and reduce diarrheal disease. Global Development Alliances with organizations like The Coca Cola Company and the Hilton Foundation help to leverage private sector funding for joint water activities bringing water, sanitation and hygiene to tens-of-thousands each year. Water quality and hygiene efforts can result in immediate improvements in the health of households relying on water from polluted rivers, lakes and, in some cases, unsafe wells or piped water supplies.

For more information, please visit:

www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/water/