

CLEAN FUTURES FOR RURAL CHILDREN IN NEPAL



Context

The 2015 earthquake in Nepal had a devastating impact on everyone, especially those living in rural areas and in poverty. It worsened a difficult situation, destroying houses and infrastructure, leaving many without access to basic hand washing facilities or clean water.

It is estimated that nine out of ten schools in the worst-affected areas were destroyed, resulting in 1.4 million children unable to go to school.

According to UNICEF, Today, 10.8 million people in Nepal do not have access to improved sanitation, 3.5 million do not have access to basic water services, and 39% of schools don't have separate toilets for girls and boys. 40% of the rural population don't have access to basic sanitation services.



The problem

The people living in the remote, rural areas of South Lalitpur and Sunsari where poverty is widespread continue to live without clean water and adequate sanitation. While nationally there has been good progress towards Government-identified WASH goals, it is uneven, and infrastructure is often poorly maintained. Nationally one in ten people still do not have clean water and almost 50% of the population lack access to a decent toilet or sanitation. In the proposed project area, the picture is considerably worse. Already poor and remote, the devastating 2015 earthquake worsened a difficult situation. It is estimated that nine out of ten schools in the worst-affected areas were destroyed, resulting in 1.4 million children unable to go to school. Reconstruction efforts have centred on urban areas, leaving slow and often stalled progress in rural areas. While schools have reopened, the infrastructure is poor and children continue to be traumatised by what they have experienced. Many children do not regularly attend school and are at risk of dropping out, drastically impacting their life chances.

An initial needs assessment of the schools in the project area indicated a very poor state of WASH facilities. Only five of the 20 schools have provision for safe drinking water. Most of the school only have one toilet which is shared between teachers and students and is frequently in a state of disrepair or uncleanliness. Children are forced to defecate outside when they need to use the toilet. In some schools, the toilet is locked, and students are embarrassed to ask for the key. There is a low awareness of hygiene and sanitation. Children have poor hygiene literacy and practices and suffer from water and hygiene-related diseases. The lack of facilities negatively impacts school attendance and puts children at higher risk of dropping out.

According to our initial survey, 65% of girls do not attend school during their menstruation because of the poor facilities and lack of access to sanitary products. They feel embarrassed of their menstruation or are not sent to school by their parents when menstruating. The situation is even more challenging for children with disabilities. Without safe, accessible, clean, and private toilet facilities, girls and children with disabilities are more likely to drop out of school. This puts them at higher risk of early marriage and exploitative work.



Project objectives

The project aims to support 7,400 vulnerable children, with a focus on 3,800 girls and 200 children with disabilities, to stay or re-enrol in school by tackling a significant cause of drop out and poor attendance – the lack of adequate provision of WASH facilities in school and a lack of understanding and adoption of hygiene and sanitation practices in poor, remote, rural Nepal. This will be done through:

- Improved child and girl-friendly, accessible WASH facilities in 20 schools in South Lalitpur and Sunsari, which cater to a poor and rural student population
- Students taking the lead in promoting sanitation and hygiene awareness and adoption within their schools to their fellow students.
- Community capacity built to respond to families' WASH needs over the long term benefitting a total population of 15,375 people.

Our local partners

Voice of Children works with children living and working on the street and families living in urban slums. They raise awareness of child abuse and provide legal, social and psychological support to children and their families. They have been a ChildHope partner since 2018 and for this project will be leading on the child protection and safeguarding activities.

Our donor

This is a three-year project funded by [Jersey Overseas Aid](#) which started in May 2019. Total budget for the project is £353,000.

Our activities

- Build or rehabilitate 40 toilets to ensure a minimum of two separate toilets in each school, one for boys and one for girls, with lockable doors. Toilets will be fully accessible with ramps and handrails where needed.
- Provide adequate hand washing facilities with each toilet: a water tank, tap, soap and hand drying materials.
- Provide 1,000 litre water tanks and water purification systems to the 20 schools for safe drinking water to reduce the risk of water-borne disease.
- Provide WASH kits (containing a water bottle, soap, a towel, toothbrush and toothpaste, sanitary pads, water jugs, and a poster with key WASH information) to students identified as particularly vulnerable and sanitary products to girls at risk of dropping out.
- Train peer mobilisers in safe hygiene practices, leadership, and facilitation skills to lead activities that will be integrated into the programme of existing child rights clubs in schools.
- Run child and gender-friendly WASH awareness-raising and life skills sessions in the classrooms.
- Support the children's clubs to be co-responsible, along with Parent Teacher Associations for the maintenance and promotion of the WASH facilities.
- Provide training for women's community groups to produce sanitary products and hygiene products for use and as an income-generating activity.
- Train the PTA and women's group members on WASH and adopting good practices, benefitting 15,000 community members.

WATCH ME



In numbers

In the first two years this project we have:

- Constructed **42** disabled-friendly toilets.
- Installed **20** safe drinking water connections and filtered storage.
- Distributed **1,131** WASH kit to school children (including soap, sanitiser, and sanitary pad).
- Trained **200** Peer educators (children and teachers) in promoting WASH activities in their schools.
- Provided **20** School with safe drinking water and toilets.
- Trained and supported **20** Community Volunteers to create awareness of WASH practise in their communities.
- Trained **228** local government officials and community based organisation members on promoting WASH behaviour.



In their words

Aanandi's story

"Sanitary pads are very important for women and their health. I have learnt to make low-cost sanitary pads that are easy to use and support women's reproductive health. This project has shown me a way to be financially independent and I have developed skills and knowledge on women's health and menstrual hygiene. I am not only economically stronger, but also socially recognised now. My relatives are very proud of me and it motivates me continue with this work in future."
Aanandi* 22 years old

Aanandi* lives with her parents in Mahankal Rural Municipality in Lalitpur district of Nepal. She says her childhood was full of love, care, and support. She was top in her class at school but unfortunately, she got diagnosed with epilepsy disorder and had to drop out of education after year 9.

In 2019, Aanandi became involved with Voice of Children, Nepal when the organisation started working with her community. When she attended a workshop on menstrual hygiene and reproductive healthcare, she couldn't help but reflect her own experiences as a teenager.

Menstruation is still a taboo in her culture and most girls do not get information they need. It is expected that they will figure it out themselves. This creates many difficulties for girls. Aanandi suffered and experienced a lot of pain due to lack of knowledge and menstrual hygiene products, and poor access to proper facilities in her school. Like most of her friends, she not attend school during their periods and many dropped out due to the lack of WASH facilities at school.

To address these issues, our WASH project engages actively with school teachers and community members. It builds their capacities to help students with challenges related to WASH, especially regarding menstrual health of adolescent girls. The project ensures they have access to the facilities, information, and menstrual hygiene products they need.

Aanandi recently attended a sanitary pad making training organised by the project team. After the training, she started making sanitary pads and encouraging other women and adolescents in her community to do the same. She is currently selling the pads made herself in the local shops, which contributes to her household income.

You can read more stories from ChildHope [here](#).