



children first.

# Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

## WASH and Children

Globally, 4.5 billion people lack access to safely managed sanitation and 2.1 billion people lack safe drinking water at home. The lack of these basic necessities isn't just inconvenient — it's lethal.

Over 800 children die every day — about 1 every 2 minutes — from diarrhea due to unsafe drinking water, poor sanitation, or poor hygiene. Suffering and death from diseases like pneumonia, trachoma, scabies, skin and eye infections, cholera and dysentery could be prevented by scaling up access to adequate water supply and sanitation facilities and eliminating open defecation.

Ensuring access to water and sanitation in schools can also help reduce the number of children who miss out on their education — especially girls. Scaling up access to WASH also supports efforts to protect vulnerable children from violence, exploitation and abuse, since women and girls bear the heaviest burden in water collection, often undertaking long, unsafe journeys to collect water.

## UNICEF and WASH

Since 1990, UNICEF and partners have played a key role as 2.6 billion people gained access to safe drinking water. UNICEF programs that started with an emphasis on water supply hardware, such as drilling rigs and hand pumps, have evolved toward a focus on sanitation and the “software” of supporting policy development, building the capacity of institutions and raising awareness about hygiene.



UNICEF has helped increase school enrollment in Malawi through the provision of safe drinking water.

© UNICEF/UN040976/RICH

## About UNICEF

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) works in more than 190 countries and territories to put children first. UNICEF has helped save more children's lives than any other humanitarian organization by providing health care and immunizations, clean water and sanitation, nutrition, education, emergency relief and more. UNICEF USA supports UNICEF's work through fundraising, advocacy and education in the United States. Together, we are working toward the day when no children die from preventable causes and every child has a safe and healthy childhood.

For more information, visit [unicefusa.org](http://unicefusa.org).

Today, UNICEF has WASH programs in 109 countries to promote the survival, protection and development of children and support behavior change around WASH. UNICEF works directly with governments, community based organizations and families to ensure access to clean and secure supplies of water and convenient sanitary facilities. Improving sanitation and hygiene in schools is a core pillar of programs to increase school attendance, and empower children as agents of change in their homes and communities. As the lead emergency agency in the WASH sector, UNICEF offers a core package of water, sanitation and hygiene interventions in times of humanitarian emergency.

## 2016 UNICEF WASH Snapshot

In 2016, UNICEF:

- Invested \$949 million to reach the most vulnerable children and families around the world access WASH.
- Had 660 experts carrying out water, sanitation, and hygiene programs in 109 countries.
- Helped 39 million people gain access to safe drinking water around the world, including nearly 29 million people in emergencies.
- Helped over 17 million people gain access to improved sanitation.
- Provided water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities in 7,100 schools in 71 countries.
- Supported the construction of over 1,600 WASH facilities in health clinics and hospitals.
- Assisted over 14 million people in over 33,000 communities to become certified as open defecation-free. ●

Over 800 children die every day — about 1 every 2 minutes — from diarrhea due to unsafe drinking water, poor sanitation, or poor hygiene.

Community health workers have taught Amnata child health-related interventions, including hand washing and other good hygiene practices.

