



children first.

# Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

## WASH and Children

Globally, 2.3 billion people lack access to basic sanitation services and 844 million people lack access to clean drinking water. 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 2014, more than 150 million people benefited from improved water supplies as a result of UNICEF's direct support; two thirds of these individuals were in emergencies contexts. 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.

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## 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, safe 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 113 countries to promote the survival, protection and development of children and encourage 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 essential to increasing school attendance and empowering 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.

## 2017 UNICEF WASH Snapshot

In 2017, UNICEF:

- Invested over \$1 billion to reach the most vulnerable children and families around the world with WASH.
- Carried out water, sanitation, and hygiene programs in 113 countries with 650 experts.
- Continued to coordinate WASH humanitarian action as lead agency of the WASH Cluster, in a total of 69 countries.
- Reached 45 million people with improved water supplies and 22 million with improved sanitation, the highest numbers ever reached.
- Distributed 3.5 million hygiene kits, including immediate response kits, family hygiene and dignity kits and locally designed kits — more than double the number procured the year before.
- Improved WASH facilities and services in over 51,000 schools and 5,000 health centers, since 2014. ●

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

