



Water, Environment and Sanitation (WES)

Afghanistan

Basic Indicators

Total population (1000s)	23,897
Under-five mortality rate (per 1000)	257
Total adult literacy rate (%)	36

Water and Sanitation Coverage

	Water (%)	Sanitation (%)
Urban	19	16
Rural	11	8
Total	13	8

Country Setting

- Since 1998 continuous drought has affected nearly 5 million people through livestock loss, crop devastation and lack of safe water.
- Two million people were internally displaced and a further 4 million became refugees due to armed conflict for over 23 years.
- Afghanistan's infant and child mortality rates are fourth highest in the world.
- Twenty per cent of newborns suffer from low birth weight and 50 per cent of under-fives are malnourished.

WES Sector Setting

- Government requested support from UNICEF to rebuild the damaged rural sector.
- Lack of coordination among Government ministries, poorly managed and overburdened services, unstructured investment and ineffective policies contribute to the poor state of the sector.
- Fifty-two per cent of schools have no safe drinking water source, 75 per cent no adequate sanitation facilities.
- Poor sanitation and hygiene conditions and awareness cause poor health among infants and young children.
- There are about 50,000 handpumps, bored and dug wells, including private wells, in rural areas.
- Piped water supply systems in some urban and hilly areas are supplemented by handpump-wells.
- Urban sanitation is largely through household septic tanks, rural sanitation through household latrines. Night soil collection and use as fertilizer is still practised in rural areas.

UNICEF WES Programme

Main Components

- Provision of water and sanitation facilities to drought-affected and high returnee communities and IDP camps.
- Support to Government and NGOs in the construction and rehabilitation of handpump-wells, piped water systems and latrines.
- Provision of water and sanitation facilities in schools.
- Water and sanitation emergency response.
- Capacity building for Government and partners and support to development of appropriate water technologies.

Programme Highlights and Achievements

- During the drought and war from 1999 on, provided water services and facilities in 60 per cent of the country.
- The programme continued activities even during the bombing campaign, due to UNICEF's long-term working relationships with NGOs and private contractors.
- Over 4,600 water points and 3,200 latrines were provided in 2002.
- The programme built 1,010 water points and 345 blocks of six-unit latrines; trained 850 teachers in hygiene education in schools.