WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE
IN EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT 2020
UNICEF would like to express thanks to its resources partners, including the Government of Australia, the Government of Sweden, and the various UNICEF National Committees in particular Japan, Sweden, Australia and Luxemburg that have contributed to supporting the work in 2020 for the children in the East Asia and Pacific region and globally. The same appreciation goes to regional entities, United Nations bodies, international non-governmental organizations, academia and the private sector for their continuous support to the UNICEF programme.

UNICEF will continue to work together with governments in various countries in the region, and with the sector constituencies, including regional and global water and sanitation entities to fulfil the human rights for water and sanitation.

These contributions and support have ensured that vulnerable children and their families in the East Asia and Pacific region have increased access to climate resilient water and sanitation services.

The thematic funding provided to UNICEF has been carefully used to innovate in many ways to support the policy development and reviews, and to create new programmatic areas of work that include young people, different groups in society, the private sector and the non-traditional scope of our interventions (police, quarantine centres, public spaces). The flexibility around the thematic fund allows long-term planning to make the WASH programme more resilient and sustainable. The support through thematic fund reflects the trust that resource partners have in UNICEF programming and UNICEF’s ability to report on the use of the resources provided, with many of the results described in this report.

UNICEF thanks all our partners for their continuous commitment and trust in us and our work for the children around the world.
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<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
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<td>AIIB</td>
<td>Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank</td>
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<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>Association of Southeast Asian Nations</td>
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<td>ASWA</td>
<td>Accelerated Sanitation and Water for All</td>
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<td>CATS</td>
<td>Community Approaches to Total Sanitation</td>
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<td>CLTS</td>
<td>Community-Led Total Sanitation</td>
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<tr>
<td>DFAT</td>
<td>Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade</td>
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<td>DFID</td>
<td>United Kingdom Department for International Development</td>
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<td>DoH</td>
<td>Department of Health</td>
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<td>DPRK</td>
<td>Democratic People’s Republic of Korea</td>
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<td>DRD</td>
<td>Department of Rural Development</td>
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<td>DWSSO</td>
<td>drinking water security and safety plans</td>
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<td>EAP</td>
<td>East Asia and the Pacific</td>
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<td>EAPRO</td>
<td>East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office</td>
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<td>ECD</td>
<td>early childhood development</td>
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<td>EMIS</td>
<td>Education Management Information System</td>
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<td>GLASS</td>
<td>Global Assessment of Drinking Water and Sanitation Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>HCF</td>
<td>health care facility</td>
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<td>IASC</td>
<td>Inter-Agency Standing Committee (for UN coordination of humanitarian assistance)</td>
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<td>IFRC</td>
<td>International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Society</td>
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<td>I/NGO</td>
<td>international/non-governmental organization</td>
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<td>IPC</td>
<td>infection prevention and control</td>
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<td>JMP</td>
<td>WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene</td>
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<td>MDB</td>
<td>multi-lateral development bank</td>
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<td>MFI</td>
<td>microfinance institution</td>
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<td>MHH</td>
<td>menstrual health and hygiene</td>
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<td>MICS</td>
<td>Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey</td>
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<td>MIS</td>
<td>management information system</td>
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<td>MOU</td>
<td>memorandum of understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>non-governmental organization</td>
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<td>ODF</td>
<td>open defecation free</td>
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<td>PDR</td>
<td>Lao People’s Democratic Republic</td>
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<td>PHATSS</td>
<td>Phased Approach to Sustainable Sanitation</td>
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<td>PNG</td>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
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<td>PPE</td>
<td>personal protective equipment</td>
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<td>ROSA</td>
<td>Regional Office for South Asia</td>
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<td>SDG</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goal</td>
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<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>Strategic Plan</td>
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<td>SPWS</td>
<td>solar-powered water system</td>
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<td>SWA</td>
<td>Sanitation and Water for All</td>
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<td>WinHCF</td>
<td>WASH in Health Care Facilities</td>
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<td>WinS</td>
<td>WASH in Schools</td>
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<td>WASH</td>
<td>water, sanitation and hygiene</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

REGIONAL CONTEXT

2020 was the year of the COVID-19 pandemic. It drew unparalleled attention to the importance of maintaining hand hygiene as one of the major infection prevention and control measures, and as a critical condition for the re-opening of schools later in the year.

Before COVID-19 hit, three out of ten households in the East Asia and Pacific (EAP) region were without handwashing facilities with soap and water on premises, half of the schools were lacking hand-hygiene facilities that had soap and water available to their students, and six out of ten health facilities were without a functional hand-hygiene facilities that had water and soap or hand sanitizer. There are no comprehensive data yet on increases in sales of hand-hygiene products or soap, though several Pacific island countries reported shortages of soap in shops and supermarkets during the first half of the year.

2020 WASH RESULTS HIGHLIGHTS

COVID-19 WASH responses: Throughout the EAP region, UNICEF supported over 14.8 million people with WASH interventions in response to the outbreak as of end of 2020. An additional 414,974 healthcare staff and community health workers were provided with personal protective equipment (PPE). UNICEF responses interventions included:

1. Handwashing and hygiene promotion
2. WASH and infection prevention and control (IPC)
3. Continuity and affordability of essential WASH services and products
These areas of intervention are linked to globally agreed areas of response as defined by UNICEF and WHO.

Despite an initial disruption of programming activities due to COVID-19, once people were able to set online at home, meetings rapidly moved online, and training and other capacity-development activities also resumed. In many countries, the online sessions were attended by many more people than would have been possible with the traditional face-to-face training sessions.

In the earlier stages of the pandemic, the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EARPO) had quickly asked for the deployment of a rapid response team in the region to support three main WASH guidelines for the country offices. Later in the pandemic, the Global COVID-19 WASH Guidelines, prepared by WHO and UNICEF, were disseminated into national systems and were reproduced in many languages to provide crucial and unambiguous information and guidance on how best to prevent COVID transmission at home, in schools and health care facilities, at work and other public places. Nevertheless, misinformation, and lack of preparedness and scenario planning have left many countries in very challenging situations.

The launch of the Global Hand Hygiene for All Initiative – already planned prior to the pandemic – offers an opportunity to capitalize on the increased awareness about the importance of hand hygiene and most countries in the region are already preparing their roadmaps to respond, rebuild and reimagine sustained hand hygiene behaviour beyond the pandemic.

After governments and partners established new operating modalities, regular WASH programming resumed.

**PROGRAMMATIC RESULTS HIGHLIGHTS**

During 2020, direct support from UNICEF resulted in the certification of 962 communities as open defecation free (ODF), with Cambodia leading the way with 359 communities, followed by Myanmar and Philippines. Lao PDR celebrated its first ODF Province. A total of 649 schools received comprehensive assistance from UNICEF with water supply; inclusive child, girl, and disability friendly toilet facilities; and handwashing stations.

The OKY Period Tracker App was launched in Mongolia and Indonesia, allowing girls to track their periods and access trustworthy information about menstrual health and hygiene, and sexual and reproductive health. WASH services were provided to 359 health care facilities.

Climate-resilient water supplies were installed benefitting 157,000 people, and in Mongolia, the Ministry of Education mandated that all school toilets would be moved indoors over the coming two years because freezing conditions render the outdoor toilets unusable during almost half of the year. Water Safety Planning is gaining traction across the region, with various countries incorporating the concept into their policies and outreach activities to sustain safely managed drinking water services. This momentum is linked to the region-wide effort to use water safety as a climate-resilient WASH entry point. In addition, countries are gradually being assessed based on the climate resilient 4-star approach developed a year earlier. Most countries are relying on community involvement to increase the ownership of the process and its chance of success.

WASH programming in several countries of the EAP region is focussed on the provision of strategic guidance, leveraging both national and local governments to increase their investments in WASH. Programming efforts have been explorative in seeking new partnerships with the private sector and civil society organizations, and innovative in mobilizing new technologies and new partners in support of moving up the water and sanitation ladders towards safely managed services. This largely applies to Indonesia, China, Philippines, and various Pacific Island states, while elements of these programming approaches can be found
across all the WASH programmes in the region. Quantifying this indirect support to countries remains a challenge that EAPRO aims to address in 2021.

The region again experienced several extreme weather events, with various cyclones and typhoons hitting the region from DPR Korea and the Philippines, to Kiribati, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Humanitarian WASH response to these events was provided to 365,000 people, and included support for internally displaced people and conflict-affected people in Rakhine, Kachin, Northern Shan, Chin and Kayin States in Myanmar. The Regional WASH Humanitarian Coordination Group has been re-convened under the co-leadership of UNICEF and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Society (IFRC) after having been dormant for several years.

Discussions with the multi-lateral development banks (MDBs), most notable the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) were intensified following the COVID-19 outbreak. Technical guidance was exchanged on WASH response strategies. The restrictions of the MDBs to only provide grants and loans to sovereign nations, state-owned enterprises or other financial institutions that re-lend the funds greatly limited direct collaboration with UNICEF WASH, which in most countries has excess absorption and implementation capacity to provide a WASH response in reaction to the outbreak. Discussions and exploration of other cooperation modalities will continue in 2021.

The regional office coordinated several new initiatives that will be taken forward in 2021, including the WASH Young Changemakers programme, Build better climate-resilient WASH programming, programming around the circular sanitation economy, the WASH Financing Lab and Go-Let – an on-line platform for small businesses and entrepreneurs to get involved in the sanitation market and the provision of safely managed sanitation services.

In collaboration with the WASH team of the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA), the EAPRO team organized an on-line mini Learning Exchange on WASH in Schools, a three-day virtual conference on Hand Hygiene for All, a virtual conference on Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management in Schools and facilitated the virtual Asia and Pacific High-Level Meeting of Sanitation and Water for All (SWA), in which 20 finance/or sector ministers participated. Over 3,000 people participated across these events.

The COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing and will continue to affect UNICEF’s WASH programming and response. This has led the regional office to re-imagine the WASH programme for 2021 and to start alignment with the new Strategic Plan for 2022-2025.

The 2021 areas of work outline the following focus areas for WASH:

- **Water and sanitation security**: climate resilience, water and sanitation safety planning, disaster risk reduction and private sector engagement, and blended finance and job creation with a focus on marginalized and all societal groups.

- **Hygiene at scale** including hand hygiene and menstrual hygiene management in schools, communities, prisons and other places.

- **Leveraging regional partnerships** for data, cutting-edge information, knowledge management, and urban WASH and humanitarian responses.
1

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

1.1

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic dominated 2020 and disrupted many of the planned WASH activities. Movement of both UNICEF and government staff was limited, as were imports and movements of supplies. It led to a growth in the facilitation of on-line training and capacity-development activities of government staff, and learning exchanges reaching many more participants than would have been possible with face-to-face trainings. Myanmar reported that by moving meetings on-line there was a faster and more cost-effective engagement with the government as well as greater engagement of state/regional government staff in at the national-level meetings. Limited mobility also led to the acceleration of the use of on-line monitoring tools and applications for tracking the movement of supplies and construction progress, and helped facilitate partner reporting.

COVID-19 greatly raised the awareness among different stakeholders and government departments of the importance of WASH and specifically hand hygiene as key infection prevention and control (IPC) measures for stemming the spread of the virus. UNICEF, in all countries in the region, worked with government and development partners on the promotion of hand hygiene and other COVID-19 IPC measures, and on disseminating the global guidance on WASH and COVID-19 using social media as well as traditional media.

In China, one UNICEF post on COVID-19 and handwashing with soap and water received a stunning 43,650,000 views on UNICEF’s website and social media channels.
In Cambodia, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Rural Development with Facebook messages on hand hygiene, which received 797,000 hits. It also successfully worked with over 1,000 private water sellers to disseminate hand hygiene messages.

In Indonesia, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health with an assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on the implementation of the national Sanitasi Total Berbasis Masyarakat (STBM) or community-led total sanitation (CLTS) campaign, and together developed a protocol to guide sanitarians in facilitating community-based STBM activities during the pandemic.

In Lao PDR, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted greatly on the government’s ability to continue their community-based outreach activities. Even though UNICEF provided PPE, WASH programming at the community level diminished greatly.

In Myanmar, UNICEF installed 7,572 handwashing stations in high-risk locations throughout the country.

In Mongolia, UNICEF, in collaboration with USAID and the Red Cross, supported 67 quarantine centres with handwashing facilities and hand hygiene materials.

In the Federated States of Micronesia, the Department of Education, with UNICEF technical support, conducted a school COVID-19 readiness survey, covering 86 of 185 schools. The findings informed the formulation of safe school protocols and the training of teachers.

In Philippines, UNICEF with the Department of Health (DoH), in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, developed a specific Cleaning and Disinfection course for sanitary workers and healthcare/quarantine facility staff. To date 2,791 people completed the course. The module has since been incorporated into the DoH Academy e-learning platform.

In Papua New Guinea, with UNICEF’s support, 73,808 students gained access to clean water and group handwashing facilities under a multi-donor funded COVID-19 response. WASH also contributed significantly to the development of Niupela Pasin, the national COVID-19 prevention and mitigation protocol.

In Timor-Leste, UNICEF installed 189 temporary handwashing stations in public places, Throughout the Pacific island countries and territories, over 500,000 bars of soap with hand-hygiene messages were distributed to vulnerable populations.

The regional office issued the following COVID-19 and WASH-specific guidelines that were widely disseminated and used across the EAP region:

- COVID-19 WASH Preparedness and Response Checklist
- Strengthening hygiene promotion and handwashing with soap during epidemics and beyond
- Guidance for gender integration in the COVID-19 WASH response
- Guidelines and checklist on WASH and School Reopening in the EAP Region

In collaboration with the UNICEF ROSA, WaterAid and Save the Children, a Mini-International Learning Exchange on the Safe Re-Opening of Schools in Asia and Pacific was organized and attended by over 700 on-line participants from 20 countries. The guidelines and checklists for the safe re-opening of schools were discussed and disseminated, and participants shared valuable experiences from across the two regions. UNICEF in almost all EAP countries provided WASH interventions in support of safely re-opening schools through training on safe re-opening as well as on the construction of handwashing facilities and provision of soap and hand sanitizer. WASH programmes also supported 287 health care facilities (HCFs) with WASH services in response to the COVID-19 outbreak during 2020.

With the global launch of the Hand Hygiene for All (HH4A) Initiative in 2020, and the increased awareness of the importance of hand hygiene for re-opening of schools and limiting the spread of COVID-19, there is a strategic opportunity throughout the region to raise the overall profile of WASH and advocate for increased government spending on WASH. In 2021, UNICEF and partners will be supporting countries in the EAP region with the preparation of national roadmaps toward HH4A.
After the direct WASH response mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak and ensuring the safe re-opening of schools, in 2021, countries in the EAP region will assess the impact of the outbreak on the WASH service provision. Delayed maintenance and reduced revenues may have had an impact on small as well as large water systems and their operators. Though the MDBs likely will support the larger operators with bridge support during the economic recovery, smaller providers may suffer cash-flow shortages to pay electricity bills to keep pumps operational. Reduced sales of sanitation products are expected due to the outbreak, but these are likely to rebound, as economies will pick up again when restrictions in movement because of COVID-19 ease.

1.2 PROGRAMMING CONTEXT

Regular UNICEF WASH programming efforts throughout the region continued the quest, along with governments, to accelerate efforts to end open defecation (Cambodia, DPR Korea, Fiji, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and Vanuatu). Supporting the scaling-up of WASH in Schools programming continued in most countries around the region. Following the United Nations Secretary-General’s Call to Action for Improved WASH in Health Care Facilities in 2018, UNICEF in various EAP countries supported the provision of WASH services in HCFs (Cambodia, DPR Korea, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste and Vanuatu), and the prioritizing of WASH in HCF in official policies (China, Timor-Leste). In support of sustaining safe drinking water supplies, UNICEF in six countries (Fiji, Kiribati, Mongolia, Myanmar, Vanuatu and Viet Nam) successfully engaged in strengthening government capacity to integrate Water Safety Planning (WSP) approaches into the national water supply programming. In the Pacific, WSPs are part of the community-based drinking water safety and security planning (DWSSP) – a disaster risk reduction approach to strengthen climate resilience in preparation for recurrent cyclones affecting the region.

Climate resilient programming linked to disaster preparedness was undertaken with governments in Lao PDR, Philippines, Viet Nam and various countries in the Pacific. Solar pumping was expanded in Myanmar, whereas in Mongolia climate resilient programming focused on protecting water supplies and school sanitation facilities from the extreme low temperatures in winter. UNICEF in Cambodia partnered with UNDP on a proposal to the Joint United Nations Sustainable Development Goal Fund to improve WASH services and solid waste management, complementing an ADB investment into reducing greenhouse gas emissions.


Both publications were very timely, providing the latest WASH coverage data for each country in the region, and were subsequently referenced widely during the COVID-19 outbreak. They also highlighted the scarcity of data in the EAP region on access to WASH services in schools and health care facilities.
Efforts to improve national monitoring of WASH were undertaken in various countries. UNICEF in Cambodia worked with the Ministry of Education on the successful inclusion of SDG indicators under Cambodia’s Education Monitoring Information Systems (EMIS). In China, UNICEF supported the National Health Commission on the revision of the assessment indicators for WASH in HCFs, which were subsequently integrated into the capacity assessment requirement in China. In DPR Korea, UNICEF worked with the Central Bureau of Statistics to integrate the SDG indicators into all the census/household surveys, Health Monitoring Information Systems (HMIS) and EMIS. While reviewing the outcome of a pilot in nine counties, final acceptance of inclusion of the indicators is still pending. In Indonesia, UNICEF’s efforts were successful in adding SDG questions on WASH in Schools to the EMIS. In Myanmar, UNICEF supported the inclusion of its Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) module on water quality testing into the national census survey – collecting water-quality data from over 19,000 households providing representative data at the district level as well as essential information for tracking progress towards the SDG target on safely managed drinking water. UNICEF also advocated successfully for the inclusion of WASH and metadata indicators in the National Indicator Framework as part of monitoring and evaluation mechanism of the Myanmar Sustainability Development Plan.

As co-custodians, together with WHO, of the JMP and through MICS, UNICEF offices are well placed to strengthen national monitoring of SDG targets 6.1 and 6.2. Though much progress has been made over the past years, particularly on increasing the number of countries with nationally representative data on water quality and access to hand-washing facilities with soap at the household level, countries in the EAP region are still lagging behind those in other regions for data on WASH in schools and health care facilities.
1.3
INNOVATIONS IN PROGRAMME MONITORING

In Myanmar, UNICEF, in partnership with WaterAid, supports the Department of Rural Development in the use of mWater, which is a mobile phone-based data collection tool to populate the Rural Water Supply – MIS database. The partnership with WaterAid was expanded to use mWater for post-ODF monitoring, functionality, usage and sustainability of sanitation services. While installing over 7,500 hand-washing stations as part of the COVID-19 response, UNICEF in Myanmar used a RapidPro-based tracking tool linked to an online live dashboard for monitoring. It was used through Viber and proved to be a low-cost, innovation that is an easy-to-use solution for providing near real-time information on progress.

In Mongolia, UNICEF supported the Water Service Regulatory Commission with the drinking water quality analyses of 180 groundwater wells in three provinces. In cooperation with the Institute of Geo-ecology, an online water quality database was established (https://water.wsrc.mn/).

Across the Pacific region, sector monitoring has been improved through a strategic partnership with Akvo, with achievements realized on WASH baseline data in rural and urban settings in Solomon Islands, and the establishment SDG WASH dashboards in Fiji (through Akvo Lumen) and Vanuatu (through locally managed portals). WinS bottleneck monitoring and baseline studies on WASH in HCFs, have been supported using Akvo Flow. In partnership with the Kiribati Local Government Association and College of Micronesia, UNICEF is engaging youths to adopt UReport/RapidPro to monitor and report WASH-related issues in their communities.

In Papua New Guinea, UNICEF and WaterAid supported the National WASH Programme Management Unit with the operationalization of the WASH MIS and using the mWater application. In 2020, the MIS covered 357 communities, 662 schools and 114 HCFs in 12 districts across seven provinces and will include an application to track ODF as well. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, regular monitoring was not possible. Instead, UNICEF Papua New Guinea uses U-Report/RapidPro and KoboToolbox and has launched the Partner Reporting Portal on eTools.

In the Philippines, Papua New Guinea and several Pacific island states, UNICEF supported the national monitoring system to track progress towards the Three-Star Approach for WASH in Schools.
1.4 REGIONAL INITIATIVES

In 2020, the EAP regional WASH team coordinated various initiatives that will be taken forward at the national level in 2021.

The WASH Young Changemakers programme was initiated with UNICEF colleagues of the Adolescent Development and Participation (ADAP) programme. This initiative is intended to use young people’s talent in the region to develop WASH-related innovative ideas in support to the ongoing COVID-19 response and other programmatic WASH challenges. The first round attracted more than 90 applicants. The eight finalists were coached and presented their pitches virtually to more than 50 participants from different entities and organizations including private sector organizations (see Box 1). The finalists are now receiving continued mentoring and support to connect with partners to advance their innovations. After this successful edition, a next round is planned in 2021. Many private sector partners, particularly from China, are interested in joining the new edition.

**BOX 1.**

First ever WASH Young Changemakers Challenge shows promising WASH solutions

Eight Young Changemakers’ promising WASH solutions in the East Asia region are summarized as follows:

- **Three innovations from Indonesia:**
  - Scaling up solar water systems for clean water supply;
  - Restoration of groundwater for freshwater supplies by building recharge wells;
  - Community-based water resource management approach to empower rural Indonesian communities.

- **One innovation from Myanmar:**
  - Technology to build township-level water purification and distribution infrastructure.

- **One innovation from Cambodia:**
  - A very innovative approach to setting up a behaviour change Lab, including hackathon.

- **Three innovations from China:**
  - MyH2O, which is data visualization platform that helps identify the water needs of rural communities and connects them to clean water solutions and funding;
  - C2X, which aims to convert CO2 into hand sanitizer through a reactor platform;
  - Dr Water, which is an online Industrial Water Management Knowledge Platform aiming to share best practice in industrial wastewater management.

Each presentation was followed by a Q&A session to better understand the Changemakers concepts. It was also an honour to have our Global WASH Chief, Kelly Ann Naylor give the final note of appreciation on the journey of the eight Young Changemakers. She pointed out that this initiative, the first ever for WASH, was timely and is aligned to the global thinking that puts young people as innovators to change the world. She congratulated the eight Young Changemakers and the team in EAPRO for the impressive achievements and vowed PD WASH team’s support to each country action plan for the Young Changemakers.
Climate-resilient WASH programming: Based on the results of a successful climate-resilient country profile assessment conducted in 2019, the WASH programme has initiated the ‘Build Better Climate Resilient WASH’ initiative, which aims to retrofit existing WASH systems to be more climate sensitive. A ‘Four Star’ approach for climate-resilient WASH programming was developed to support countries make progress through four incremental steps of work:

1. Sustained WASH services,
2. Assess climate impact and emission reduction for the services;
3. Community-wide climate resilient approach that includes community protocol and strategy of validation;
4. National-level climate resilient services.

East Asia Pacific 4-Star Approach to WASH Climate and Resilient Services (WASH-CRS)

As of 2020, few countries have been classified under this guidance, and there is a prospect to work with other partners in the region to fully validate and strengthen the approach. The implementation guide will be completed next year and will be implemented in four countries: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Timor-Leste.

Sanitation circular economy: Safely managed sanitation services will not be achieved in small cities and town without closing the sanitation loop by using faecal by-products and wastewater as resources. This ‘circular economy’ approach addresses both resource scarcity and climate resilience. In the context of sanitation, the circular economy focuses on the whole sanitation chain, which includes the provision of toilets, the collection of waste, treatment and transformation of waste into products such as fertilizer, fuel and clean water. The WASH programme plans to rollout circular economy sanitation models in East Asia and the Pacific to provide sustainable, long-term and low-cost solutions for sanitation. At the same time, business opportunities from the circular economy offer an opportunity to solve youth employment challenges. Through this model,
UNICEF will support the capacity building of 1,000 young entrepreneurs to deliver circular economy sanitation services to half a million people and sanitation products to 5 million people in each participating country. There is already ongoing discussion with UNICEF National Committees from Finland, Luxembourg, China and Australia on this initiative.

**WASH Financing Lab**: UNICEF aims to establish innovative WASH Financing Labs in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam. The four labs will bring together local and international expertise from both the public and the private sectors to mobilize resources, provide technical assistance and build the capacity of local entrepreneurs in providing sustainable and smart water supply to 10 million underserved and vulnerable children and their families. The Innovative WASH Financing Lab will

- Build a sustainable, well-regulated enabling environment (legal and regulatory framework) and structured debt financing framework for the WASH sector
- Mobilize public (grant) funds for viability gap funding and credit enhancement measures;
- Blend public, commercial and private finance for WASH investments
- Create a pipeline of bankable investments (including a Project Development Revolving Fund);
- Identify smart, climate-resilient WASH technologies;
- Strengthen the capacity of private-sector partners through workshops, training initiatives and information sharing.

Developing smart, climate-resilient water systems using innovative finance mechanisms is crucial to improving the access of the remaining unserved – the ‘last mile’ – population to WASH services and, at the same time, addressing the need for sustained services and job creation in the affected areas.

**GO-Let** is an innovative online platform to facilitate the procurement of and access to sanitation services through the sanitation supply chain. GO-Let aims to ensure that all districts, villages and households in East Asia and the Pacific have easy access to sanitation services and appropriate manpower to deliver the services. It also provides guidelines to help municipalities choose between sanitation technologies and understand the full costs of operating and managing those facilities. Features of GO-Let include crowdsourcing for poor households or districts without sanitation or with low sanitation coverage by tier (person, foundation, organization). The online platform will be introduced first in countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines where sanitation coverage is low. UNICEF Private Fundraising and Partnerships, the WASH section of UNICEF and the Indonesian technology company GO-JEK are fostering a partnership and after more than a year of discussion, the first design is being developed with next steps to follow.
1.5 STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

Various meetings were held with regional development banks including ADB, AIIB and the New Development Bank (NDB) on how UNICEF WASH and the banks could collaborate on the immediate COVID-19 response and jointly position themselves to respond to WASH sector needs post-COVID. As all bank’s disbursement modalities have little to no room to provide directly support to UNICEF, nor channel part of any grants or concessional loans through UNICEF, without a specific request from governments, discussions explored other collaboration mechanisms, whereby UNICEF’s technical capacity and position in the region could be leveraged in support of bank-financed investments. With special grant funding from ADB, a pilot in seven countries around the region was agreed upon, starting with the Philippines. UNICEF and the ADB will work with government of the Philippines to explore the potential of supporting activities implementing the circular sanitation economy concept.

The Regional WASH Humanitarian Coordination Group has been re-convened under the co-leadership of UNICEF and IFRC. Over the course of the year, the group gradually expanded to over 35 organizations, including private sector actors, academia, NGOs, United Nations organizations and learning institutions. The platform was useful to share guidance and knowledge during the COVID-19 pandemic. In mid-2020, the Regional WASH Humanitarian Coordination Group was recognized as a member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). The Group has solidified its relationship with the ASEAN secretariat and with one of the ASEAN Health Clusters where a joint WASH declaration is being discussed.

The scheduled training event with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore and the Singapore Red Cross on capacity development, and WASH and the ‘leaving no one behind’ agenda has been postponed to 2021.
WATER SANITATION AND HYGIENE RESULTS

2.1 DRINKING WATER SUPPLY

Across the EAP region, UNICEF assistance reached over 520,000 people with basic drinking water services 70 per cent of whom received non-COVID-19 related humanitarian assistance. Sixty-eight community drinking water supplies were supported reaching almost 157,000 people.
In Cambodia, UNICEF collaborated with two private operators of piped systems to expand their services into previously unserved areas. UNICEF supported households with subsidies to get house connections. UNICEF also supported the Ministry of Industry, Science and Technology with the drafting of the Guiding Principles for Pro-Poor Water Connection Subsidies. UNICEF further provided hypochlorite for two large drinking water utilities that had their supplies disrupted due to COVID-19 restrictions. These utility companies together had a catchment population of about 200,000 people, and UNICEF’s support was sufficient to alleviate the temporary shortage in supplies. The increased adoption of the water safety planning approach across the region is an important development towards ensuring safely managed drinking water services that meet water quality standards at all times. The risk-based system-wide approach, which is largely carried out by communities, reduces the risk of breakdowns and at the same time strengthens community management of the system.

In 2020, across the Pacific island countries, another 293 communities newly engaged with community-based water safety planning bringing the total to nearly 500 communities.

In Myanmar, 10 communities were provided with climate resilient solar-powered water supply systems. The experience with the community-managed metered household connections in two states has been recorded and turned into a manual. Over 100 engineers and township officers of the Department of Rural Development of Myanmar were trained on the implementation of community-managed household water meter systems, community-based water safety planning and the new SDG concept of safely managed drinking water services.

In Viet Nam, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development organized trainings on water safety plan development for government officials from 20 central highlands and northern mountains provinces, resulting in their commitment to develop 45 water safety schemes.

2.2 SANITATION AND HYGIENE

In 2020, across the EAP region, UNICEF continued to support efforts towards ODF communities in Cambodia, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Indonesia, Kiribati, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Philippines and Timor-Leste. In 2020, 962 communities were newly certified ODF because of UNICEF’s assistance directly benefitting over 410,000 people.

Lao PDR, celebrated its first ODF province, which is a milestone, achieved through many years of concerted effort.
Bolikhamxay Province becomes the first province to receive an open-defecation-free (ODF) status

Lao PDR has made a breakthrough in its sanitation drive, as Bolikhamxay became the first province to be declared open defecation free (ODF) by the Ministry of Health.

After years of tireless effort from the community, supported by the government in partnership with UNICEF, the province has led the way for the country’s target to end open defecation by 2025. The historical feat was celebrated amidst an event in the provincial meeting hall attended by the Provincial Governor, Minister of Health, President of the Lao Women’s Union, Deputy Representative of UNICEF, Provincial Governors and heads of Provincial Health Departments from five nearby provinces, and representatives of relevant authorities.

“I would like to congratulate the people of Borikhamxay and the provincial government for this important achievement,” said Minister of Health Bounkhong Sihavong. “The people of Bolikhamxay have taken us one step to closer to our goal of ending open defecation by 2025, by setting an example to other provinces to follow.”

Poor sanitation is one of the biggest hurdles to the development of a country as it impacts the health and education of the people. Open defecation is often the cause of water-borne diseases such as diarrhoea and cholera that leads to malnutrition and stunting among children. According to Lao Social Indicator Survey II, about 1.5 million people in the Lao PDR still practice open defecation.

“Ending open defecation is the first step towards total sanitation. UNICEF is proud to be part of this mission led by community and Government in Bolikhamxay Province,” said Ms. Beate Dastel, UNICEF Representative a.i. “Improved sanitation and proper hygiene behaviour of mothers and children are imperative for the best growth and development of children,” she added.

As building toilets does not always guarantee improved sanitation and hygiene, the Government of the Lao PDR introduced a ‘Community-led Total Sanitation’ approach in 2008 to mobilize community members.

Since 2015, the National Center for Water and Environmental Health, the Department of Health and the Lao Women’s Union in Borikhamxay Province and UNICEF worked together to support a district-wide approach to stop open defecation. As part of the intervention, a district-level ODF plan was developed and implemented by the Provincial and District Multi-Stakeholders Committee formed with officials from various government agencies.

The intervention in Borikhamxay is expected to benefit more than 300,000 people, and the provincial government will continue to mobilize communities to maintain ODF status while other provinces will accelerate their efforts to reach this status.
In Cambodia, UNICEF has supported pro-poor sanitation subsidies through a payment-by-instalment modality for families facing cash-flow constrains, allowing over 1,800 poor households to purchase a partially subsidized toilet.

In Indonesia, following the recommendations of the sanitation market assessment, UNICEF engaged potential businesses in discussions on how to reduce the market gap on products and services for safely management sanitation. The discussion covered topics ranging from standardized non-leaking septic tanks to de-sludging and safe-disposal services. Business associations were also engaged around the WASH4Work concept, which encourages businesses to provide better WASH services to their employees and to the communities from which they draw their workers. A pilot on WASH4Work was started to generate evidence on how business can play a strategic role in providing access to water and sanitation as part of their corporate social responsibility actions. Discussions will continue into 2021. UNICEF Indonesia also prepared an integrated safely managed sanitation digital public campaign to increase household awareness about the need for regular de-sludging of their septic tanks to reduce the risk of environmental and water pollution from faecal waste. The campaign included public fundraising for UNICEF’s programme on sanitation. To strengthen the STBM (CLTS) advocacy and learning-sharing agenda, UNICEF provided technical support to the Ministry of Health in designing and implementing the 2020 STBM Award.
In an unprecedented event, the ministers of ten key ministries in Indonesia came together on Global Handwashing Day to declare their support and commitment to scale up handwashing with soap initiatives within their respective institutions and jurisdictions to help beat the COVID-19 pandemic and reduce the risk of future outbreaks in Indonesia. These ministers included the Minister of Health, Minister of Planning and Development, Coordinating Minister for Human Development and Culture, Coordinating Minister for Economy, Minister of Education and Culture, Minister of Religious Affairs, Minister of Home Affairs, Minister of Public Works and Housing, Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy, and the Minister of Villages and Development of Disadvantaged Regions.

In a video speech, the ministers called for all government ministries to develop plans and budgets to make handwashing facilities with water and soap available in their respective office buildings and responsible institutions, and to promote behaviour change among their own employees, partners and other stakeholders. They highlighted the need for collaborative partnerships between the government, development partners, the private sector, and non-government and civil society organizations to increase access to handwashing facilities with soap and increase awareness for hygiene behaviour change across all critical settings in schools, health care centres, communities, workplaces and public places, such as markets, transportation hubs and religious places.

UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health to organize a Ministerial Roundtable with participation from the Director-Generals of the ministries participating, and included local government champions from provinces and districts that have been at the forefront of fighting the pandemic to discuss strategies for collaboration and coordination among different ministries and other stakeholders to achieve “Hand Hygiene For All” in Indonesia. Details of the full event can be accessed here.
In Papua New Guinea, the National Department of Health endorsed the ODF definition and certification protocols. UNICEF is leading a pioneering effort in Papua New Guinea to establish mechanisms to eliminate open defecation and promote sustainable sanitation. This includes demonstration of the effective approaches in the four focus districts and supporting the government at district, province and national levels in instituting systems to sustain and scale up the initiative. UNICEF, through the implementing partners, supported the development of ODF certification protocols and establishment of verification teams in the focus districts, where 83 additional community mobilizers were trained. About 159 active mobilizers triggered the demand for improved sanitation in 318 communities.

**BOX 4.**

**UNICEF and Post PNG partnership to maximize the reach of the Global Handwashing Day 2020 campaign**

UNICEF and Post PNG, a public enterprise, partnered to deliver a successful Global Handwashing Day (GHD 2020) campaign. The partnership leveraged the in-house printing and logistics capacity of Post PNG to reach remote schools in EU-UNICEF WASH project districts. The campaign reached nearly 116,000 school children (48 per cent of these children were girls), and health workers in 36 healthcare facilities with knowledge and awareness on improved hygiene. An information kit containing specially designed guidance for schools on activities for the day and specially designed information products was distributed to 250 schools and 36 healthcare facilities in time for the observation of GHD 2020.

One of the key features of the GHD 2020 campaign was the nation-wide call for joining the synchronized handwashing at mid-day. Post PNG contributed through a full-page newspaper appeal under their corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative.

Post PNG instituted a special mechanism to track and follow the distribution of the information to schools and healthcare facilities. The evidence was collected through the kit handing over photographs to the school authorities.

The target audience included:

- **Primary audience** – students and teachers in the 200 schools in the Klinpela Komuniti Projek and 45 primary schools in Port Moresby

- **Secondary audience** – general public, schools, health centres and other institutions across the country.

A teacher at Koglamp Public School, Western Highlands Province receives the GHD information kit
BOX 4 continued

The following additional actions supported maximizing the campaign reach:

- The Education Secretary appealed to the Provincial Education Advisors to commemorate the event in the project schools.

- Launched the idea of synchronized handwashing activity by target persons/groups for 20 seconds at 12:00 noon.

- Aired specially developed TV and radio spots during GHD week leading up to the GHD Commemoration on 15 October – appealing to the masses to join for synchronized handwashing.

- A newspaper advertorial (in the leading national dailies: Post Courier and The National) appealing to the masses to join the synchronized handwashing on 15 October at 12:00 noon.

- At the district level, the implementing partners lined up contextual innovations, e.g., Nawaeb District engaged a sports celebrity to amplify the campaign message.

The campaign was a major success. However, the experience provided several lessons to improve future campaigns. The preparation started two and half months ahead of the GHD2020, however, several challenges were encountered on timely distribution of the information kits to all the participating schools. Poor road connectivity between the district headquarters and schools challenged the distribution and tracking. At a post-campaign review meeting, one of the Post PNG officers reflected “This project, being the first of its kind, has tested our capacities and inspired initiatives for better coordination, planning and an outcome-based approach going forward. We now see that impact projects such as this that cover big geographical areas and require systematic approaches, especially in the Papua New Guinea environments, is very much achievable.” Some of the pointers for future campaigns include:

- **Advanced planning and production**: prepare an annual calendar for similar events and rollout the plan at least three months in advance. This will give Post PNG enough time to identify cost-effective printing, and logistics options and schedules for implementation.

- **Consider developing long-term partnerships with public enterprises** to join forces in such campaigns, as combined strengths could maximize the campaign reach.
In Philippines, the rollout of the national Philippines Approach to Sustainable Sanitation (PhATSS) policy, development of the PhATSS Toolkit, and implementation of the UNICEF WASH Programme Evaluation were all postponed, as the Department of Health and other relevant National Government Agency staff were redirected to supporting the COVID-19 pandemic response. The Global Handwashing Day Learning Symposium had a total reach of 104,800 people on the day, with over 7 million people subsequently reached by the recording and social media posts; while the World Toilet Day celebration and Sanitation Learning Exchange webinar series reached 784,579 people (live stream and recording) and a further 788,574 people through social media posts. One challenge of the online platforms has been weaker monitoring on the effectiveness, as few participants have completed the post-training evaluations. Limited progress was made on implementing the output-based blended financing for the household sanitation programme, as the anticipated 2020 budget contribution from the Department of Health was not approved, and government staff was diverted to the COVID-19 response, leaving no time for resolving outstanding programme design issues.

2.3 WASH IN INSTITUTIONS

- **WASH in Schools**

In partnership with Save the Children and WaterAid, UNICEF EAPRO organized an online mini-International Learning Exchange on the Guidelines on WASH and the safe re-opening of schools that reached over 3,000 participants throughout the region. These guidelines have been extensively and successfully used throughout the EAP region to safely re-open schools. Regionally, UNICEF supported countries in the preparation for and/or actual reopening of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, throughout the EAP region, UNICEF’s direct support provided inclusive child- and girl-friendly WASH facilities to 649 schools, benefitting almost 135,000 children – roughly 48 per cent of whom were girls.

In Cambodia, UNICEF provided hand-sanitizer and disinfection items to all 13,482 schools and 3,064 community pre-schools. It funded gender-sensitive WASH improvements for 45 schools, benefiting over 18,000 school children.

In China, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education with the development of a Manual for Sanitary Toilet Management in Primary and Secondary Schools.

In the DPR Korea, the Education Commission, with UNICEF’s support, held consultations with staff from pedagogic and health institutions based on which it developed teacher guidelines on hygiene promotion in schools and kindergartens. An analysis of routine school monitoring data found that WASH data for 247 out of 1,716 nurseries, kindergartens, primary and secondary schools in the nine ‘convergence counties’ where UNICEF’s support is focused. 58 per cent had a basic water supply service, 57 per cent had basic sanitation services and only 26 per cent had basic handwashing facilities with water and soap present.
In Indonesia, where the Ministry of Education has allocated US$ 102 million over the period from 2016 to 2020 to improve WASH facilities in schools, an initial assessment showed that only 16 per cent of all schools had access to basic water supply, sanitation and hygiene services. During the Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHH) Day campaign, UNICEF launched the OKY Period Tracker app, which allows girls to track their periods and access trustworthy information about menstrual health and hygiene and sexual and reproductive health. The app currently has 6,000 users. Four hundred people participated in Indonesia’s MHH online training, and MHH talks, and Instagram Live received 38,150 viewers. In total an estimated 900,000 people were reached during the MHH campaign.

In Lao PDR, UNICEF, in close collaboration with GIZ, finalized the guidelines for the 3-Star Approach to WASH in Schools to incrementally improve the WASH situation and hygiene practices in schools. UNICEF and GIZ worked with the Ministry of Education to approve gender-responsive WASH in Schools Standards and the 3-Star Approach guidelines, which include provisions for MHH management. UNICEF and GIZ have successfully demonstrated the standards and 3-Star Approach in 27 Schools across three provinces. WASH in schools received increased attention during the rollout of the back-to-school campaign, and in 2021, UNICEF will explore how to take the 3-Star Approach to scale.

In Myanmar, UNICEF collaborated with the Ministry of Education and Sports on the development of a technical manual for WinS construction standards to be finalized in 2021. UNICEF supported 317 schools in Myanmar with WASH services, of which 189 were also provided with MHH management facilities. Schools in Myanmar have remained closed during most of 2020, but UNICEF collaborated with the Ministry and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) on the installation of hand hygiene facilities in schools in preparation for school openings in 2021. Online teacher trainings on WinS and the Myanmar version of the 3-Star Approach – the Thant Shin (Mr. Clean) Star Approach – were developed and piloted with teachers in Kachin State. The online training will be rolled-out to other States in 2021.

In Mongolia, as a result of UNICEF’s climate-resilient WASH programming, the Ministry of Education has announced the aim of eliminating outdoor pit latrines for all schools and kindergartens within two years and allocated government funding to move the facilities indoors so they can be used throughout the year. In June, Mongolia also launched the OKY Period Tracker app. Over 46,000 views and 1,038 likes, shares and comments were received on UNICEF Facebook and three media platforms. Of the users, 74 per cent were from Ulaanbaatar and 60 per cent of the viewers were 13-24 years old.

Throughout the Pacific island countries, UNICEF offices supported 94 schools with WASH and MHH management facilities.

In Fiji, a study on the WinS needs of adolescent girls with disabilities was undertaken by CBM Nossal to identify innovative pathways to narrow inequities and improve WASH in special schools.

In Papua New Guinea, following the endorsement by the National Department of Education of the School Hygiene Club Guidelines, school hygiene clubs were formed in 230 schools with over 19,000 children participating in the promotion of improved hygiene behaviours. With UNICEF assistance, WASH services were improved in 85 schools, including group handwashing facilities, and menstrual health and hygiene management rooms. In 2020, UNICEF partnered with Post PNG on the celebration of Global Handwashing Day and disseminated of messages about the importance of observing good hand hygiene. It also distributed 250,000 bars of soap to health workers and students following a donation by Colgate-Palmolive.

• WASH in health care facilities

The COVID-19 pandemic put a spotlight on the importance of WASH in health care facilities (HCFs). The global WHO/UNICEF guidance on WASH in HCFs in times of COVID-19 was widely disseminated throughout the region. In addition, through UNICEF’s direct support, a total 359 of HCFs were provided with comprehensive WASH facilities combining both the regular programming and COVID-19 response.
2.4 ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Policy and strategy development, partnerships, coordination and advocacy, capacity development, exploring alternative funding and financing modalities, and strengthening of monitoring and accountability are grouped under the heading of enabling environment activities. UNICEF-WASH programmes throughout the EAP region engaged in activities across all these areas. Some examples have already been given in previous sections, so here we only list some new and additional examples of UNICEF’s efforts in strengthening the enabling environment for accelerating progress towards the water and sanitation goals under SDG targets 6.1 and 6.2.

In Cambodia, UNICEF teamed-up with UNDP and prepared a joint United Nations programme proposal to the joint UN SDG Fund with the aim of leveraging funding from the Green Climate Fund and domestic financing from commercial banks for improved WASH and solid waste management services for over 100,000 people in five provinces. This programme would involve local authorities and private sector service providers, and complements and provides increased efficiencies for public infrastructure investments financed through sovereign lending to Cambodia by ADB.

Strengthened by Indonesia’s commitment to host the 2021 Inter-Ministerial High Level Meeting of Finance and WASH-Sector, ministers under the umbrella of Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) and UNICEF engaged in high-level discussions with the Ministry of Finance to advocate for increased domestic investments in WASH. UNICEF also facilitated a Ministerial Round Table on Financing and COVID-19. To address the widely acknowledged financing gap achieve higher levels of WASH services in Indonesia, UNICEF continued the support the government to increase the scale of ZISWAF (Zakat, Infaq, Shadaqoh and Waqf) utilization for the WASH sector. The support included planning advocacy and learning sharing workshops with WASH working groups and Zakat institutions from 13 provinces and 16 districts, development of technical guidance, and a joint fundraising model for the UNICEF partnership with the National Board of Zakat (BAZNAS). UNICEF also conducted a preliminary analysis on domestic finance mobilization to increase local governments’ investment for safely managed sanitation. The recommendations of this analysis are being applied as part of a partnership with local governments to identify options for increasing local revenues for sanitation.

In China, with UNICEF’s support, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs launched the Rural Sanitation and Toilet Revolution Strategy to Achieve SDGs, which will be implemented under China’s 14th Five-Year Plan 2021-2025. UNICEF supported several regional knowledge exchange activities in China with private sector partners to encourage greater private sector participation in the provision of safely managed sanitation services. With support from the regional office, and in partnership with Vital Strategies, UNICEF in China commissioned the development of a comprehensive list of Child Environmental Health Indicators (CEHI). Evidence supporting prioritization of CEHI was gathered through an online consultation with experts from academia, government and United Nations agencies, and through the systematic review of 7,310 papers on the environmental risks faced by children and the health impacts. The findings will inform future policy development beyond WASH to keep children safe from environmental risks.

In Kiribati, the ‘WASH for Babies’ initiative was launched to demonstrate the effectiveness of intersectoral approaches that integrate health and nutrition, early childhood development (ECD), communication for development (C4D) and WASH in small island states.

In Timor-Leste, UNICEF facilitated the first WASH Bottleneck-Analysis. Among other things, the analysis found that especially sub-national WASH stakeholders lacked a platform to speak-out and voice their concerns. It also noted the need for extra efforts to raise the profile of WASH in rural settings and institutions. While Timor-Leste has visible engagement in climate change activities, its response in the WASH Sector is still not adequate.
2.5 POLICIES, STRATEGIES, GUIDELINES AND MANUALS

In DPR Korea, UNICEF collaborated with the Ministry of Urban Management (MoUM) and the Scientific Institute on the development of four guidelines:

1. Design of water supply systems using EPANET;
2. Water treatment, surveillance, testing and reporting protocol;
3. Safely managed sanitation in rural areas; and
4. Construction, and operation and maintenance (O&M) of water supply systems and a catalogue of WASH items.

In addition, MoUM, in collaboration with the University of Agriculture, will finalize guidelines on composting.

In Papua New Guinea, the government endorsed the National WASH Advocacy and Communication Strategy, developed with UNICEF support, for dissemination and implementation in 2021.

In Myanmar, with support from UNICEF, the first-ever National Sanitation and Hygiene Policy and Costed Implementation Plan was finalized for approval and launch. Further, national guidelines were finalized on WASH in HCFs, as well as developing WASH in schools standards and manuals on the construction of collector wells in rural areas, and operation and maintenance of solar water-pumping systems.

In Mongolia, UNICEF provided technical support to local governments on interconnecting policies and plans for climate-resilient WASH, disaster risk reduction (DRR), and winter preparedness. Three provinces have included climate-resilient WASH-related recommendations into their Provincial 5-year Development Plans.

In Vanuatu, UNICEF supported the government’s now-postponed diaper ban by creating guidance, and information and education communication (IEC) materials around the safe disposal of child faeces.
BOX 5. Integrating gender in the Accelerated Sanitation and Water for All (ASWA-II) Programme in Cambodia and Myanmar

Women and girls are disproportionately affected by poor access to WASH, burdened both by the drudgery of fetching water and the consequences of inadequate WASH in homes, schools and health care facilities. Effective gender integration is foundational to achieving the outcomes of the Accelerated Sanitation and Water for All Phase II programme (ASWA-II), and will serve to strengthen the implementation of UNICEF WASH programmes in Cambodia and Myanmar.

The review of the ASWA-II programme in Cambodia and Myanmar has found significant opportunities to strengthen gender data in reporting and future WASH programming. Actions supportive of improved gender data include advocating for more gender sensitive national monitoring systems, improving programmatic frameworks, instigating qualitative or quantitative research and utilizing data from partner studies. Increased sex-disaggregation of data, including for key ASWA indicators, capacity building activities, incentives and subsidies, and positions of responsibility in WASH management, offer an opportunity to improve reporting on gender integration in the ASWA-II programme and broadly in national WASH programmes. When gender disparities are identified, qualitative research could enable a better understanding of underlying gender norms and their impact on WASH programmes. The WASH in Schools and Health Care Facilities programmes are at early stages of implementation in both Cambodia and Myanmar, and this is a pivotal time to ensure programme planning and frameworks include attention to gender at every opportunity.

Development of guidelines and capacity support are identified as key opportunities to promote gender-responsive WASH programming. It is also an opportunity to increase knowledge about gender equality, harmful gender norms and gender-based violence, as well as addressing specific issues such as strengthening menstrual health and hygiene knowledge, reducing women's burden of unpaid work in the home, increasing men's contribution to domestic and caregiving work, and promoting women's involvement in leadership and decision-making. There is a growing body of evidence around how women's participation in the management of WASH programmes provides improvement in WASH programme performance, and advances women's empowerment and gender equality. There is a need to advocate for gender parity and increased participation of women, particularly in paid and leadership roles, as well as positions of responsibility in ASWA-II.
2.6 WASH IN EMERGENCIES

In addition to responding to the COVID-19 outbreak, UNICEF offices provided emergency WASH assistance to people affected by drought, floods, cyclones and typhoons in DPR Korea, Fiji, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Viet Nam. In total, just over 365,000 people in these countries received humanitarian WASH assistance. UNICEF WASH support in the EAP region, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic directly reached just under 3 million people. In addition, 725,000 people were reached with the distribution of hygiene kits – tailored to the COVID-19 response with bars of soap, hand sanitizer, face masks, washable re-usable menstrual pads, a bucket, a ladle or pan, and water purification tablets.

The only ‘activated’ WASH Cluster in the EAP region is in Myanmar, where UNICEF is the Cluster Lead at the national and sub-national levels (Kachin, Northern Shan and Rakhine States). As part of Myanmar’s Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), UNICEF’s humanitarian assistance on WASH reached 266,463 (78 per cent of UNICEF’s Humanitarian Action for Children target) displaced and conflict-affected people in Rakhine, Kachin, Northern Shan, Chin and Kayin States. Menstrual hygiene services were provided to girls and women affected by conflict. Due to deteriorating humanitarian access in Rakhine State, UNICEF adopted alternative delivery mechanisms through contractors to construct latrines and, in some instances, undertook direct distribution of supplies. Despite an extremely complex operating environment, including COVID-19 and the related restrictions on movement of supplies and staff, and quarantine requirements, UNICEF and partners were able to maintain the provision of critical services for internally displaced populations.

In the DPR Korea, UNICEF supported the provision of humanitarian WASH supplies (soap, bucket, jerry can, water purification tablets) to 91,625 people affected by tropical cyclone Lingling and the resulting floods.

Fiji and Vanuatu, were struck in April by Tropical Cyclone Harold and again by Tropical Cyclone Yasa, which both caused extensive damage. UNICEF provided humanitarian WASH support to 71,813 people.

In Vanuatu, the government, with UNICEF technical support, guided over 50 communities in the development of community-based drinking water safety and security plans (DWSSPs). Building further on the Tropical Cyclone Harold response, support continued to improve climate-resilience in WASH by expanding ‘resilient water safety planning’ and/or DWSSPs in communities, schools and health care facilities. This concept contributed to the mobilization of additional funding for DWSSPs from the Green Climate Fund.

In Solomon Islands and Kiribati, 25,000 people affected by severe flooding received humanitarian WASH support. The COVID-19 pandemic gave rise to the need to revisit preparedness and response approaches to ‘compounded’ emergencies throughout the Pacific, where disaster response capacities are already limited. All Pacific countries, including high-risk exposure countries, such as Tonga, participated in a WASH Cluster Coordination training and contingency planning to support countries to prepare for and respond to disasters and adapt to climate change.

In the Philippines, in early 2020, UNICEF WASH was still providing significant support to people affected by Typhoons Tisoy (November 2019) and Ursula (December 2019), and continued monitoring the WASH needs of the people displaced by the eruption of the Taal Volcano. The impacts of the multiple typhoons highlighted the vulnerability of poorly sited, constructed and maintained WASH infrastructure and demonstrated the need for stronger integration of disaster and climate resilience into national budgets, technical guidelines, local level plans, and service provider capacities. Despite the COVID-19 outbreak, the Department of Health – which is the national WASH cluster lead – and UNICEF were able to prioritize the finalization and ratification of the National WASH in Emergencies Policy (DOH AO 2020 0032, issued in July 2020) and the development of the final draft of the accompanying WASH in Emergencies Technical and Operational Guidelines, which applies a people-centred approach to ensure the WASH response is appropriate, inclusive, and gender sensitive to the needs of affected populations.
2.7 REGIONAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Several key events were organized or supported by the WASH programme at the regional level drawing a combined total of over 3,000 participants:

- The Asia & Pacific Sanitation and Water for All meeting, organized on 2 December 2020, was jointly convened by UNICEF, World Bank and ADB, and had the participation of 20 finance and/or sector ministers (including Cambodia, Fiji, Lao PDR, Indonesia and Viet Nam). Ministers from Philippines and Timor-Leste did not attend but nominated high-level officials to attend on their behalf. A total of 581 participants joined the global livestream online.

- A week-long Virtual Regional Conference on Hand Hygiene in Asia and Pacific, held during 12-15 October 2020, was jointly hosted by UNICEF ROSA and EAPRO in partnership with WHO, FANSA, SWA, WSSCC, Water Aid and Plan International.

- The WASH in Schools Mini International Learning Exchange (WinS Mini-ILE) on the Safe Re-opening of Schools event, organized on 25 June 2020 with GIZ, Water Aid and Save the Children, brought together more than 700 specialists and government officials from many sectors.

- The OKY menstrual management mobile application developed by the Gender and WASH sections was presented during many events, such as the Virtual Conference on MHM in Schools attended by 1,300 people, and four countries (Cambodia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea and Fiji) are ready to take OKY to the next level.

To support country-level WASH programme implementation and COVID-19 response, various guidelines and strategies were developed at the regional level. On COVID-19, the WASH team at EAPRO prepared the following documents:

- EAP ‘Regional Snapshot of Household Sanitation, Drinking Water and Hygiene (2000-2017)’ and a corresponding summary report, using the latest WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme WASH data, which was ready in time for the COVID-19 preparedness and response;

- EAP ‘Regional Snapshot of Hygiene Baselines in Households, Schools and Healthcare Facilities’ using WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme data;


- Contribution to guidelines for other sectors, such as Social Protection Guidelines for COVID-19 response in prison and other detention centres.

Other non-COVID-19-related products that the regional WASH team prepared or supported included:

- Climate-resilient WASH framework for the EAP region (Build Better Climate-Resilient WASH) and capacity-building sessions delivered;

- Guidelines on WASH in health care facilities and school reopening with developed with WASH components;

- Cases studies on school reopening with WASH analysis developed;

- Gender analysis on WASH programme implementation in Myanmar and Cambodia completed in the context of the ASWA-II programme, supported by the UK Department for International Development;

- WASH financing strategy and training completed in Myanmar with roadmap of the Financing Lab to develop and deploy new financing models for WASH;

- Viet Nam WASH financing brief completed;

- Review of sanitation market assessment strategies in Cambodia and Indonesia;

- Development of different knowledge management products, including 11 newsletters, and 14 webinars on themes, ranging from humanitarian response to development issues were conducted.
3

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

• Challenges

2020 was dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Barely two months into the year, WASH programmes throughout the region had to change their traditional way of supporting governments and working with partners by moving most communication online. Depending on the country and in-country context, many government staff and implementing partners faced challenges in establishing good Internet connectivity at home. As mentioned earlier, movement of staff and supplies was severely limited, and countries reliant on imports faced series issues because of limited cross-border traffic. It is not often mentioned, but the pandemic also impacted many staff and their families on a personal level, affecting their state of mind and productivity. Despite these challenges, new operational modalities were quickly established, with meetings and capacity development activities rapidly and successfully moving online. The many online mobile-based monitoring and reporting tools gained significant importance, and many programmes across the region expanded the use of such tools.

Funding for the multi-national COVID-19 response for a large part was provided through MDBs – with the Boards of Directors reallocating hundreds of millions of dollars to provide relief and an adequate response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Contact with ADB and AIIB at the regional level intensified but finding the right modalities to operationalize cooperation between UNICEF and the MDBs proved to be quite challenging and remains largely unresolved. UNICEF throughout the EAP region has ample excess absorption and implementation capacity for providing WASH services, relief and response to the COVID-19 pandemic, however,
the MDBs can only disburse grants and loans to sovereign states or state-owned entities, or financial institutions who re-lend funds and, do not have a modality to provide funds directly to an international organization such as UNICEF. Discussions and support to the MDBs, therefore, were largely limited to exchanges of a technical and strategic information and insights.

A continuing challenge for EAPRO and the country offices remains the quantification of UNICEF’s indirect support. In countries such as China, Indonesia, Philippines and Viet Nam, UNICEF’s WASH programming is largely strategic, facilitative towards national and local-government, explorative in seeking new partnerships with the private sector and civil society organizations, innovative in mobilizing new technologies and new partners in support of moving up the water and sanitation ladders towards safely managed services, and catalytic in leveraging domestic finances at both national and sub-national levels in support of WASH services. It becomes increasingly challenging to fund UNICEF’s presence in WASH in these countries as some donors still prioritize counting toilets and taps as the measurement of progress. Luckily, throughout the region, UNICEF still has solid support from many bi-lateral partners that traditionally provide financing in the region. However, on the horizon, the challenge looms to maintain a solid and high strategic level of WASH presence throughout the region.

- Lessons learned

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to new areas of programming: WASH in public places and quarantine centres; wastewater management and quality testing; and solid waste management, which include hospital waste and PPE management. The WASH programme has provided specific technical support to address these new areas of work. These have also led to a development of new close partnerships with WASH sector players in urban and rural areas including Manila Water, private sector associations in Cambodia, CAREC Institute and ADB (particularly on lessons and knowledge sharing on the COVID-19 impact on the water sector).

The Regional WASH Humanitarian Working Group has been re-vamped, which gradually has added more than 35 organizations, including private sector organization, academic institutions, NGOs, United Nations organization, and learning institutions. This platform was useful for sharing first-hand guidance and knowledge during the pandemic. This group was informal until the middle of 2020 and then was recognized as a member of the IASC regional group in the second half of the year.

Based on data collected over the past months, the hygiene practices in the region have significantly improved and there was an increased recognition of the importance of WASH and the Hand Hygiene for All (HH4A) Initiative since the pandemic. However it is reducing with the reduction of cases. This trend is signalling that hand hygiene practices may decline again when an increasing proportion of the population becomes vaccinated. A key challenge for the WASH community will be to keep the focus on the importance of maintaining hand hygiene even when the largest threat of infections has passed.

At the country level, Indonesia’s coalition with various stakeholders, in particular donors, development partners and international NGOs (such as DFAT, USAID, World Bank, ADB, and water.org), that works with business associations in exploring market opportunities and leveraging domestic financing for the provision of safely managed WASH services holds great promise. Though activities were largely on-hold during 2020, they will be rekindled in 2021.
The total amount utilized in the region for WASH programming in 2020 was US$78 million. This financial report focuses only on regional expenditure.

In 2020, EAPRO WASH planned a total of US$980,000 out of which US$976,584 was spent for regional-level actions and technical support to countries.
### TABLE 1:
**Planned WASH EAPRO programme 2020 (in US dollars)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Funding types</th>
<th>Budget planned 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>OUTPUT 5.7:</strong> UNICEF EAPRO has strengthened capacity to design and implement gender-responsive, equity-focused WASH programmes that deliver results for the most disadvantaged children at scale.</td>
<td>RR</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>270,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OUTPUT 6.7:</strong> EAPRO has strengthened evidence, partnerships and resource-mobilization capacity to improve WASH outcomes.</td>
<td>RR</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>680,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>980,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. RR: Regular Resources, OR: Other Resources – Regular (add ORE: Other Resources – Emergency, if applicable)
2. Planned budget for ORR (and ORE, if applicable) does not include estimated recovery cost (only programmable amounts).

### TABLE 2:
**Total funding received and sources of funding: Financial situation 2020 (in US dollars)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant</th>
<th>Allocated (2020)</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
<th>Available amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular Resources (RR)</td>
<td>130,000*</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC170534 (DFID ASWA-II)</td>
<td>170,000</td>
<td>85,026</td>
<td>84,974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC189906 (Thematic)</td>
<td>635,500</td>
<td>277,966</td>
<td>357,534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC1899060006 (Japan Natcom)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC1899060060 (Swedish Natcom)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC180673 (DFAT)</td>
<td>527,446</td>
<td>483,592</td>
<td>43,854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,462,946</strong></td>
<td><strong>976,584</strong></td>
<td><strong>486,362</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*RR received in 2020 was $30,000 ($100k was from the exchange of fund with other EAPRO sections). WASH Expenses in 2020

### TABLE 3:
**Planned and expenditures for WASH EAPRO programme 2020 (in US dollars)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Funding types</th>
<th>Budget Planned 2020</th>
<th>Expenditures 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>OUTPUT 5.7:</strong> UNICEF EAPRO has strengthened capacity to design and implement gender-responsive, equity-focused WASH programmes that deliver results for the most disadvantaged children at scale.</td>
<td>RR</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>270,000</td>
<td>63,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OUTPUT 6.7:</strong> EAPRO has strengthened evidence, partnerships and resource-mobilization capacity to improve WASH outcomes.</td>
<td>RR</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>130,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>680,000</td>
<td>783,534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>980,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>976,584</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. RR: Regular Resources, OR: Other Resources - Regular (add ORE: Other Resources - Emergency, if applicable)
2. Planned budget for ORR (and ORE, if applicable) does not include estimated recovery cost (only programmable amounts).
### TABLE 4:
**Detailed expenditure by cost categories 2020 (Front Insight by outputs) (in US dollars)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost categories</th>
<th>Expenses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular Resources</td>
<td>130,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.01 Water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.02 Sanitation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other resources</td>
<td>846,584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.01 Water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.02 Sanitation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>976,584</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 5:
**Planned budget forecast 2021 (in US dollars)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Funding types</th>
<th>Budget Planned 2021</th>
<th>Available Funding</th>
<th>Shortfall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OUTPUT 5.7: UNICEF EAPR has strengthened capacity to design and implement gender responsive, equity focused WASH programmes that deliver results for the most disadvantaged children at scale</td>
<td>RR</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUTPUT 6.7: EAPR has strengthened evidence, partnerships and resource mobilization capacity to improve WASH outcomes.</td>
<td>RR</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OR</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1,300,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,300,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5

FUTURE WORK PLAN AND UNICEF STRATEGIC PLAN 2021–2025
The 2020 programming context has re-directed the way that EAPRO operates. The WASH programme has re-imagined the 2021 Annual Work Plan and beyond, and aligned the working areas with the upcoming organizational strategic plan.

- **Water and sanitation security**: Climate resilience, disaster risk reduction, private sector engagement, blended-financing and job creation.

- **Hygiene at scale**: Hand hygiene and menstrual hygiene management in schools, communities, prisons and other places.

- **Leveraging regional partnerships for data**: cutting-edge information, knowledge management, and urban WASH and humanitarian responses.

The WASH programme will continue to **strengthen climate resilient WASH programming** by further developing the 4-star approach for climate resilient WASH programming; promoting young people’s participation through the WASH Young Changemakers programme; and consolidating the WASH Financing Lab in Myanmar and extending the concept to other countries to support job creation. The WASH programme will use several entry points to improve climate resilience programming, including water safety planning and sanitation safety planning. The 12 steps for WASH climate resilience will be further disseminated for better understanding and implementation.

In line with the **Hand Hygiene for All Initiative**, the programme will support the development of HH4A country roadmaps and investment plans, along with supporting a ‘hygiene lab’ that make hand hygiene services available in schools, health care facilities, public places and communities overall. We will plan a weeklong hygiene programme event in the region with business and private sector operators. We will also feed the lessons learned and recommendations from the MHM financing studies into country programmes and explore new financing options for menstrual hygiene.

Based on the **extraordinary partnerships initiated** during the pandemic, the programme will continue fostering partnerships with regional organizations (WHO, UNDP, UNIDO, Asia Institute of Technology) as well as private sector partnerships (SCG, Lixil and others) in areas where collective actions are required. These forward-looking interventions include:

- real-time monitoring for key WASH indicators,
- knowledge management,
- water and sanitation in urban areas,
- innovation and cutting-edge technologies and information, and
- humanitarian response.

Following the lead of the Indonesia WASH programme, EAPRO will explore a closer collaboration with the **Toilet Board Coalition** and their incubator programmes around the **circular sanitation economy** to increase access to sustainably managed sanitation services. These hold great promise for the EAP region that consists largely of middle- to upper-middle-income countries with an increasingly vibrant private sector that has many innovative young entrepreneurs.

Partnership development will be a strong area of the work to be done at regional level. Some key organizations such as **Sanitation and Hygiene Fund (SHF)** merit being strategically approached to further reduce open defecation in the region. The partnership with **ADB** needs to mature to support ADB’s Sustainable Urban Environment Water programme. The UNICEF-WASH programme will continue co-leading the WASH regional emergency group with IRFC, and explore additional organizations to join the group. Also, the WASH programme will continue to deliver the **UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)** and **Australian DFAT funded programmes** in the region and initiate with them new areas of programming.
ANNEX: 1
HUMAN INTEREST AND NEWS STORIES

► INDONESIA
Back to school, wherever students are

► PHILIPPINES
Families heavily affected by COVID-19 receive hygiene kits

► PAPUA NEW GUINEA
Women lead community to build toilets for every household

► CAMBODIA
Global Handwashing Day – How UNICEF Cambodia is supporting hand hygiene for all in schools
INDONESIA: Back to school, wherever students are

AIS, age 7, washes her hands at an orphanage where she lives in Jakarta. © UNICEF Philippines/Dimatatac

A LOOK INTO HOW STUDENTS ACROSS INDONESIA ARE RETURNING TO SCHOOL AMID THE PANDEMIC

Since schools in Indonesia were closed in March to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the landscape of children’s education has been profoundly altered. Over 60 million students, their teachers and families have been impacted. UNICEF is committed to ensuring that all children in Indonesia continue to learn no matter where they are and is working with the government and partners to minimize the disruption to education.

The 2020-2021 school year started on 13 July, with students around the country have resumed their studies. UNICEF photographs from the past six months show how children were learning at the beginning of the year, and how they have confronted the unprecedented challenges caused by the pandemic.

Children, especially the most vulnerable, are among the most severely impacted victims of the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of its emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia, UNICEF is working with the government to provide support and guidelines for distance learning and child protection while schools are closed.

Ais, age 7, has been living in an orphanage in Jakarta since 2016 and attends a nearby elementary school. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the orphanage has implemented new rules for the children to stay and study within the premises.

Ais learned how to wash her hands correctly with by singing a song she memorized from school. To help children like Ais meet their basic needs, UNICEF delivered sanitation and personal hygiene kits to over 1,700 childcare centres all over Indonesia.
PHILIPPINES: Families heavily affected by COVID-19 receive hygiene kits

JIHAN MELITON, a resident of Barangay Sto. Nino, Marikina City, is one of the 100 recipients of hygiene kits distributed on 28 August 28 by UNICEF Philippines in partnership with the Red Cross Philippines.

© UNICEF Philippines/Dimatatac

UNICEF, in partnership with the Philippine Red Cross, provided 300 of hygiene kits to 1,498 people in the barangays of Sto. Niño, Malanday, and Tumana in Marikina City as part of its COVID-19 response.

For Jihan Meliton, a 38-year-old mother of six, 28 August 2020 wasn’t a typical day. It was the day she lined up with 90 others to receive their family cleaning and hygiene kits at the community gymnasium of barangay Sto. Niño. Before the pandemic crippled the livelihoods of many people in the country, Jihan’s husband earned around PHP500 (US$10) a day from his job as a welder-electrician, and Jihan helped by selling any merchandise she could find such as used clothing. That was on a good day, she says, but there were times when they barely had enough for their basic needs.

It’s been almost half a year since strict quarantine measures have been imposed, and Jihan says now they rarely have good days. “Sometimes, we only have loose change and we don’t reach 500 pesos,” she sighs. “We just try to help each other in the community when we can.”
Jihan’s family is among almost 4 million poor households nationwide receiving assistance from the national government through a conditional cash transfer programme. Dubbed the 4Ps for Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (Bridging Program for the Filipino Family), the cash transfer programme provides a modest monthly grant for education, health and nutrition.

For the most part, Jihan says the assistance has been helpful. But with six children, ages 6 to 18, and an indefinite pause on their livelihoods, staying optimistic has been difficult.

So when she got word that her family was one of the selected recipients of the hygiene kits, she was grateful for the assistance in obtaining the essential supplies they needed to protect themselves against COVID-19.

According to Jennifer de Guzman, Administrator of the Red Cross Marikina Chapter, they chose the three barangays to receive the kits because they have the highest numbers of COVID-19 cases in the city, a high poverty rate, and a high concentration of informal settlers.

“With the help of the barangay officials, we selected those who are most vulnerable,” she says. “Since the supplies are limited, we made the selection per sector to represent abused women, solo parents, the elderly who are taking care of their grandchildren, and persons with disabilities.” Most of the recipients are jobless and are beneficiaries of the 4Ps like Jihan’s family.
PHILIPPINES

The family cleaning and hygiene kit contains soaps, laundry powder, isopropyl alcohol, bleach, rubber gloves, washable facemasks for adults and children, and a bucket with dipper for collecting and storing water.

© UNICEF Philippines/Dimatatac

were fortunate to have been provided with piped water in the community before the pandemic. In partnership with UNICEF, Unilever Philippines joined this round of distribution by providing soaps and laundry powder for the family cleaning and hygiene kit adapted for the COVID-19 response. The adapted kit contains soaps, laundry powder, isopropyl alcohol, bleach, rubber gloves, washable facemasks for adults and children, and a bucket with dipper for collecting and storing water.

When asked how her family has been coping in the pandemic given the increased importance of personal hygiene, Jihan says they which proved critical in avoiding infection.

“I tell my children to bathe regularly and always wash their hands before eating,” she says as she glances at the hygiene kits with anticipation.

For more information, contact the UNICEF Office in the Philippines.
PAPUA NEW GUINEA: Women lead community to build toilets for every household

MEET THE WOMEN OF LUHOX HAMLET IN KABIUFA VILLAGE IN THE EASTERN HIGHLANDS PROVINCE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

These women led their community to stop open defecation in two months by building toilets for every household.

Encouraged by the achievement, the women introduced several hygienic behaviours, such as frequent handwashing, maintaining a clean environment and beautifying their homes, which has put this hamlet of 32 households on a steady path towards total sanitation.

“In March this year [2020] we assessed Luhox hamlet’s toilet status and found that majority of households shared toilets – in some cases 3 to 4 households were using one toilet. The few existing toilets were mainly dilapidated basic structures or simple open pits and open defecation was common,” says Elsie Gepeve, age 43.

Gepeve is one of the two Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) volunteers working with UNICEF’s implementing partner, Touching the Untouchables (TTU), to mobilize the community to improve their sanitation.

“We decided to act when we learnt from the mobilizers during community meetings that defecating in the open or in dilapidated toilet structures posed serious health risks to our community, including contaminating our water sources with pekpek (faeces),” says Waimale Takis, a 70-year-old widow, who is the hamlet leader and led the pioneering group of 15 women, 9 of whom are elderly widows.
“We women got together and got started as the men and young people were at first reluctant,” she adds.

The effort that ignited these women’s action is part of the CLTS initiative intended to empower 800 communities to improve their sanitation and hygiene practices, including eradicating open defecation. It is part of the European Union co-funded EU-UNICEF Pilot Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Project that is under implementation in four districts: Central Bougainville, Goroka, Hagen Central and Nawaeb.

Pravin More, UNICEF WASH Papua New Guinea Specialist, has experience with similar initiatives in India, and explains the CLTS approach. “It is an innovative and effective way of mobilizing communities to eliminate open defecation. Communities are facilitated to conduct their own appraisal and analysis of open defecation (OD) and take their own action to become ODF (open defecation free). Families are provided appropriate information to build their own toilets using locally available materials. The CLTS approach works without giving them subsidies of any kind,” says Pravin.

According to the 2019 Joint Monitoring Programme Report, only 15 per cent of the population in Papua New Guinea have access to improved sanitation facilities. Poor sanitation is a leading cause of waterborne diseases including diarrhoea, a major killer of children under age 5. Poor sanitation is also a major contributor to stunting, or impaired growth and development that children experience from poor nutrition and repeated infection. According to the Papua New Guinea National Nutritional Policy 2016–2026, nearly 4 out of 10 children in the country suffer from stunting, which causes about 20 per cent of all mortality of children under age 5, or can lead to long-term cognitive defects, poor performance in school or fewer years of completed schooling, and lower adult economic productivity.

“For a long time, I have been embarrassed for my home not having a toilet,” says Veno Napaiha, 80, one of two of the oldest women in the group. “I did not know where and how to start to get one.”

“But when the community mobilizers came here and taught us that it is important for every home to have a toilet and the women decided that we should build the toilets together and for everyone, I knew that I could now finally get one,” she says.

The women tackled the task cooperatively by dividing it into two phases – digging and construction. They dug two pits a day for each of the 32 households – one for a toilet and the other for solid waste disposal. They would start at 8 am and end at 4 pm.

The owner of the household that they were working on was charged with preparing meals for all the workers so that they could save time instead of going back and forth to their own homes for meals.

The women’s determination to put a new toilet in every home of the hamlet prompted the men and other members in their community to join the effort. Soon, they all started collecting building materials from the forest to construct roofs and frames for the toilets.

“In our culture, men traditionally do all the building,” says Jacob Gepeve, age 46, one of the community members. “So, when we saw what the women had done in a very short time, we went with them to the forest to bring the building materials – bamboo, wood and grass for constructing the walls and roofs and worked together to complete the job.”

While making the toilets, the women also decided, with support from the community mobilizers, that they could do more to improve sanitation and hygiene in their homes and community. They constructed hand-washing stations for each toilet, paved footpaths to the toilets with stones for easier and safer access, planted flowers around them for beautification and take pride in keeping the toilets clean. Furthermore, the hamlet, for the first time, made a public toilet, which the women say is for use by outsiders passing through the community.
Luhox community members have also started to address environmental sanitation issues such as waste management by digging and using garbage disposal pits for solid and liquid waste, constructing household racks for hygienically cleaning and drying household utensils, and beautification of their homes with flowers.

On 5 June 2020, about two months after community mobilizers’ first visit to the hamlet, the community celebrated its open defection-free status, and was one of the five first hamlets in Kabiufu village, which is made up of 20 hamlets, to achieve this feat.

Martin Moses, WASH Coordinator for the Goroka District Development Administration, hailed the achievement of the women in Luhox hamlet as it demonstrated what was possible for the other pilot 200 communities in the Goroka district where similar efforts are under way to eradicate open defecation. Lessons learned from this pilot will be used by the district leaders in addressing the problem in other communities.
CAMBODIA: Global Handwashing Day – how UNICEF Cambodia is supporting hand hygiene for all in schools

TAK HAB, Education Director for Kampot Province, stands in front of a small selection of the hygiene supplies delivered to the 700 schools in his province.
© UNICEF Cambodia/2020/Antoine Raap

EVEN AS WE MARKED GLOBAL HANDWASHING DAY, UNICEF WAS MANAGING A MAJOR OPERATION TO BRING HYGIENE SUPPLIES AND SAFETY EDUCATION MATERIALS TO ALL 13,482 SCHOOLS AND 3,064 COMMUNITY PRE-SCHOOLS IN CAMBODIA. THESE ARE ESSENTIAL FOR SAFE RE-OPENING.

At 7 am, Tak Hab, Education Director for Kampot Province, was already at his department’s headquarters, lifting boxes. It wasn’t his typical job, but it wasn’t a typical morning – it was the day UNICEF delivered several tons of hand hygiene, cleaning and disinfection supplies to enable all 700 schools in his province to re-open safely following long closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This was the latest stage in a major operation UNICEF is running to bring hygiene supplies and safety education materials to all 13,482 schools and 3,064 community pre-schools in Cambodia, supported by a campaign to educate and inform the public on how children can return safely.
Mr Hab’s department headquarters had been converted into a warehouse for the day, with handwashing facilities, soap, cleaning products and learning materials arranged in enormous piles for each school. Education department staff, UNICEF employees, teachers and volunteers bustled around organizing. “I’m not here for symbolic reasons or to show my authority,” Mr Hab smiled while taking a quick break. “I want to help on a practical level, because this is so important. I heard of teachers and parents fundraising to buy soap and other cleaning products because they knew it was the only way to re-open. These supplies from UNICEF will be a huge relief for them.”

While the simple act of washing hands with soap came under the spotlight in 2020 as one the best defenses against COVID-19, it has long been known to be crucial in preventing many diseases. Researchers estimate that if everyone routinely washed their hands, a million deaths would be prevented every year, with diarrhoea-associated deaths reduced by up to 50 per cent and respiratory diseases reduced by 16 per cent. Global evidence has shown how such measures lead to improved health and nutrition, which is essential to the growth and development of children.

“It’s not just about COVID-19,” says Cherm Bunny, a teacher at Krang Snay School in Kampot Province. “Practicing good handwashing helps children protect themselves from so many illnesses. But it’s true that COVID-19 has made a lot of people focus on its importance more. I’ve seen many changes. Some kids are coming into school with their own alcohol gel. That would never have happened before!”
In order for good handwashing and hygiene to be practiced in all homes and schools in Cambodia there are many challenges to be overcome, including limited infrastructure, and limited availability of water and soap at convenient locations. According to data from the UNICEF and WHO Joint Monitoring Programme for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), poor rural households are the most disadvantaged when it comes to hygiene: 43 per cent do not have a handwashing facility with soap and water on their premises. Similarly, 53 per cent of rural schools do not have a handwashing facility with soap and water.

Handwashing has long been a pillar of UNICEF’s work supporting the Royal Government of Cambodia to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. Long before the words COVID-19 had even been heard, the Government set a national target that: Every person in rural communities has sustained access to safe water supply and sanitation services and lives in a hygienic environment by 2025.

COVID-19 has made meeting this target more urgent, and UNICEF has ramped up its work accordingly. As well as informing the Cambodian public about the benefits of handwashing and developing WASH services across the country, it has led the way on the procurement and distribution of key hygiene supplies in schools, funded by the European Union other partners in the multi-donor Capacity Development Partnership Fund (CDPF), and in pre-schools, funded by the People’s Republic of China.

Hong Mansou, age 12, was especially happy to see new handwashing facilities installed. He is a serious student with a long-standing ambition to become a doctor. He also lives with a grandmother who has a long-term sickness, so he has even more reasons to be cautious during the pandemic. “I am really careful,” he explains. “I try to avoid crowded places and I make sure I always wash my hands for more than 40 seconds. That will be easier now.”
When procuring hygiene supplies, particular attention was paid to the needs of younger children, who often find it more difficult to understand and follow instructions, and who benefit from anything which can make handwashing fun. Accordingly, UNICEF procured 7,000 Happy Taps for pre-schoolers. These bright, visually appealing, and ergonomic handwashing stations make the process easy for the young by including soap and water in a single portable unit. They proved an instant hit in the Kampot pre-school we visited, with students rushing to take turns in washing their hands.

Three-year old Sopheaktra was one. “I really like the Happy Tap. But actually, I know all about washing my hands,” he explained proudly, while waiting for his father to collect him. “My parents showed me how to do it properly and I know it’s very important. Not just for me but for other kids in my class.”

“It’s true,” smiled his father, Seak Chanthouch, arriving a few minutes later. “Not long ago he would never have washed hands if we didn’t make him. Now he does it by himself, every time he comes back home from playing. It’s really sunk in and I think that’s a good habit for life.”
ANNEX: 2
REPORT FEEDBACK FORM

Please fill out form at:
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