



GLOBAL WATERS



The municipal government in Surakarta, in Indonesia's Central Java province, engages the private sector to deliver desludging services to the wider community. Photo credit: USAID IUWASH PLUS

Strengthening Urban Indonesia's Water and Sanitation Systems: Geser si Jahat (Out with the Bad) and the 1,000 Rupiah Healthy Toilets Movement

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In Indonesia, safe sanitation is a big challenge that goes beyond just access to a toilet. The vast majority of the country's human waste is released untreated into the environment with devastating consequences — approximately 100,000 children across Indonesia die every year from diarrheal diseases. In fact, approximately 90 percent of groundwater in Jakarta, the country's massive capital city, is contaminated with E. coli bacteria.

Some communities are still learning about the dangers of unsafe sanitation and the high rate of water contamination. "People in urban areas say, 'But we do have a toilet, so we're okay,'" says Lina Damayanti, advocacy and communication advisor with USAID's Indonesia Urban Water, Sanitation and Hygiene *Penyehatan Lingkungan untuk*

Semua (IUWASH PLUS) project. The problem is that most of these toilets empty raw sewage directly into the environment, not into a septic tank or municipal sewage system. The Government of Indonesia has committed to changing this and achieving the Sustainable Development Goal of universal access to safely managed water and sanitation by 2030. Through the five-year (2016–2021), \$48.4 million IUWASH PLUS project, USAID is building the Government of Indonesia’s capacity to reduce barriers to safely managed water and sanitation services and improve hygiene practices. One of the main barriers is that the poor can not afford the cost to connect to the improved services and the utilities lack access to alternative financing.

IUWASH PLUS works with governmental and donor agencies, the private sector, NGOs, service utilities, and communities to strengthen the overall WASH ecosystem in urban Indonesia. The project, which has recently received additional funding from the Swiss Government State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, supports water and sanitation service providers to ensure that improved access is maintained over the long term.

Financing and Sanitation Expansion

“USAID IUWASH PLUS focuses on technical assistance, not physical construction,” explains Alifah Lestari, the project’s deputy director. An example of this is its partnership with 35 local governments in the provinces of North Sumatra, West Java, Central Java, East Java, South Sulawesi, Maluku, North Maluku, and Papua as well as Jakarta and Tangerang districts to improve household services, such as the availability of piped water and toilets with septic tanks. The project facilitates microfinance loans from financial institutions and subsidies from the government so that more households can connect to piping and vacuum truck operators. At the local level, IUWASH PLUS boosts local governments’ ability to better manage septage and improve operational and financial performance of sanitation utilities. The project also conducts formative research on the realities of sanitation conditions for low-income families so that utilities can make better management and programming decisions.

To help households finance septic tanks, IUWASH PLUS is helping community health workers, also called Sanitarians, spread the word about GESER SI JAHAT, an acronym for Gerakan Seribu Rupiah Siapkan Jamban Sehat, which means “The 1,000 Rupiah Healthy Toilets Movement.” It is a locally developed program which promotes incremental savings — like 1,000 Rupiah, or less than \$0.10 — for toilets and safe septic systems. In Indonesian, “Geser si Jahat” is equivalent to the English expression “Out with the bad.”

“The idea of GESER SI JAHAT came up when I met some community members who are motivated to have their own toilet with a septic tank but had limited financial capacity to build the facility,” said Muliastuti. “USAID IUWASH PLUS helped me to implement the idea by facilitating the discussion with communities to agree on the monthly saving scheme and establish the sanitation forum, [which] collected and managed the community saving,” said Veli Muliastuti, a sanitarian in Margahayu, Bekasi, West Java. “As a sanitarian, I am called to end this habit.”

Through the program, households contribute 1,000 Rupiah per month for five months toward the cost of a toilet and septic tank. Through their corporate social responsibility funding, local businesses including Mitra Keluarga Hospital and Bank

Jabar also contribute.

Sludge Control

In many urban areas, entrepreneurs have stepped up to remove fecal sludge for a fee. Unfortunately, these companies often dispose of the sludge by dumping it, untreated, in local waterways. IUWASH PLUS helps local governments to develop regulations to curb these practices and ensure septage treatment plants for safe sludge disposal.

In Malang, East Java, for example, the project facilitated a series of discussions between the municipal wastewater agency known as UPTD PALD and 11 private desludging operators. These discussions resulted in a March 2019 cooperative agreement that will allow the private operators to connect with customers via the UPTD PALD, which will develop a customer database and promote desludging services to the wider community.

Both local government and the private operators expect to benefit from the agreement. “Private desludging operators have long been operating in Malang City and have served thousands of customers,” said Ari Kuswandari Yushinta, head of UPTD PALD. “It is necessary for UPTD PALD to establish a partnership with them to ensure that they meet environmental health and safety requirements when delivering their services, including disposing of the septage in the treatment plant.”

“Being a partner of UPTD PALD, I hope we can serve more customers in the future. UPTD PALD will also train the operators to improve service quality,” said Johan Setiawan from CV Prayogo, a private desludging service operator.

“Together with the Government of Indonesia, USAID is creating a market for sanitation products and services to make sure that activities like desludging is self-sustaining beyond the project period because they are creating a market for those services,” explains Trigeany Linggoatmodjo, senior WASH program specialist with USAID/Indonesia.

Creating this market demand for sanitation begins at the community level with people like Veli Muliastuti, the sanitarian. “We want to build the legacy for the future,” says Lestari. “People like Veli will continue to help after IUWASH PLUS is finished.”

“We are not working alone,” says Damayanti. “If it’s not done hand-in-hand with people who are living there, it will not be sustained.”

By Christine Chumbler

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