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WASH PARTNERSHIPS AND LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Partnerships and Learning for Sustainability (WASHPaLS) is a five-year project funded through the Global Health Bureau to support USAID's goal of reducing morbidity and mortality in children under five by strengthening the evidence base for improved sanitation and hygiene interventions.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

WASHPaLS identifies and shares best practices for achieving sustainability, scale, and impact of evidence-based environmental health and WASH interventions. Through extensive desk reviews, field-based implementation research, a small grants program, and technical assistance, WASHPaLS

works with implementing partners, donors and other sector stakeholders to broaden the evidence base on the use and effectiveness of sanitation interventions in **three core research themes: Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS), market-based sanitation (MBS), and hygienic environments for infants and young children (IYC).**

Distinguished academics, practitioners, and policy makers from across the WASH sector provide expert perspectives to the project through an internal research working group and an external WASHPaLS Advisory Board. WASHPaLS engages with national and global actors to promote the use of WASHPaLS-generated evidence and emerging best practices by practitioners and policy makers, tapping into broad coalitions and dynamic partnerships.

RESULTS

Core Research. WASHPaLS prepared detailed literature reviews for each of the core research themes to identify gaps in the evidence base. WASHPaLS then developed plans for field-based implementation research to fill the identified evidence gaps and is partnering with multiple stakeholders across several countries to carry out research.

- Our CLTS implementation research focuses on: 1) an examination of whether targeting subsidies at the poorest and most vulnerable households in a community might improve the sustainability and equity of sanitation gains from CLTS (Ghana), and 2) a qualitative and quantitative examination of the range of conditions in which CLTS is most effective to guide future implementation and investment decisions by governments, donors and implementers (Cambodia, Ghana, Liberia, Zambia).

Life of Project:

September 2016 – February 2022

Geographic Scope:

Global, with activities in Bangladesh, Cambodia, DRC, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Uganda, and Zambia

Implementing Partners:

Tetra Tech in partnership with Aquaya Institute, FHI 360, FSG, Iris Group

Website: <https://www.globalwaters.org/WASHPaLS>

“WASHPaLS strengthens USAID’s WASH programming at country level while enhancing global learning and promoting adoption of evidenced-based programmatic approaches needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.”

– Jesse Shapiro, Environmental Health Team Lead, USAID

- Our MBS work focuses on: 1) understanding the factors that impact the viability of rural sanitation enterprises, the profile of entrepreneurs who are best suited to act as focal point of sales for customers, and the types of enterprise capital that are required to improve viability (Cambodia, India, Nigeria); and 2) understanding, via a suite of decision support tools, the changes in market rules (e.g., legislation, government policy, regulation) that can potentially improve viability of sanitation enterprises or increase toilet sales.
- Our hygienic environments work focuses on identifying and testing interventions to address infection pathways not typically disrupted by the traditional suite of WASH measures: 1) domestic animal excreta in immediate living environments, and 2) exposure of IYC to pathogens via ingestion of dirt and/or human and animal excreta, as well as through exploratory mouthing behaviors. Through a multi-year research effort including aspects of product development, formative research, and trial of improved practices, WASHPaLS seeks to understand whether a protective play space (playmat and play pen) significantly reduces exposure of IYC to harmful enteric pathogens (Ethiopia).

Small Grants. WASHPaLS has disbursed nine grants to organizations conducting research in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Nepal, Philippines, and Uganda to investigate and generate evidence to support innovative ideas in WASH behavior change programming focused on handwashing behaviors, separation of IYC from animal feces, safe management of child feces, mHealth, and improved flooring as a structural improvement to induce hygiene behavior change.

Technical Assistance. WASHPaLS provides USAID Mission and technical bureaus short-term technical assistance on a range of WASH themes. To date, the technical assistance includes the following:

- Sanitation Market Assessments and support for MBS interventions in Kenya, Liberia, Senegal and Ethiopia. The market assessments will inform future USAID investments in rural sanitation. The assessment in Ethiopia is investigating the potential impact of reducing import tariffs and domestic taxes on the uptake of plastic sanitation products and the cost to the Government for doing so.
- Assessment of the effects of COVID-19 on access to WASH services and products in USAID high-priority and strategy-aligned countries to assist governments, donors, and implementers prepare an informed response to the WASH-related impacts of the pandemic.
- Action research conducted in four factory settings in Nepal and Kenya to better understand how improved menstrual hygiene management (MHM) in the workplace contributes to women's economic empowerment by quantifying the financial and social costs and benefits to women and their employers.
- Impact evaluations for the Cambodia NOURISH program to understand the effectiveness of integrated nutrition and WASH interventions, and of the Kenya RAPID program to understand whether and how the use of remote borehole sensors affects functionality of water points.
- Performance evaluations have been prepared for the following projects: Kenya KIWASH, Kenya RAPID, Ghana WASH for Health, and Madagascar RANO WASH (ongoing).
- Other assignments include: formative research in Mozambique to generate a base of evidence for WASH behavior change and gender equity programming; applied research to understand barriers and opportunities for improving access to safely managed sanitation in pastoralist areas within the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands of northern Kenya, and; an assessment of the integration of WASH and nutrition activities within the Ethiopia Growth through Nutrition Project.

Results and findings of the research are disseminated through peer-reviewed publications, research and learning briefs, presentations, webinars, and communications materials, available on GlobalWaters.org.

CONTACTS

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