



## WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE: AFGHANISTAN

### Background

World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. World Vision serves all people, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender. Established in 1950, World Vision operates in nearly 100 countries with oversight, fundraising, and implementation branches. Nearly 40,000 staff members (95 percent of whom work in their own countries) work in health, education, livelihoods, food security, child protection, WASH, and economic development programs.

World Vision International began emergency relief operations in Afghanistan in 2001. The initial five-year programme was aimed at addressing the urgent needs of children and families affected by drought and decades of conflict. Since then, World Vision has transitioned to long-term sustainable community-based development, primarily focused on the wellbeing of children and their families in a multi-sectoral integrated approach, including WASH, health, nutrition, livelihoods/agriculture/food security, education, child protection and women's empowerment.

### Project Impact

Over the past 16 years, World Vision Afghanistan's (WVA's) WASH programming has significantly contributed to child health improvement through increased access to water, sanitation and hygiene in WVA operating areas. World Vision's WASH Strategy is integrated with Health and Nutrition to enhance child health outcomes and drive nutrition gains. The impacts of this integrated Health/Nutrition/WASH approach can be seen in the Badghis Province where WVA's 2016 project interventions resulted in a 32 percent reduction (from 45 percent to 13 percent) in diarrhoea incidence. Positive impacts of WVA's WASH programming were also observed in the intervention areas in Ghor, Badghis, and Herat, as outlined in the 2017 Maternal and Under-5 Nutrition and Child Health (MUNCH) Project Evaluation:

- 33.8% increase in the use of improved sanitation facilities in communities and institutions
- 11% increase in men, women, boys and girls using an improved drinking water source (from 47% to 58%)
- 13% increase in families using Oral Rehydration Therapy (ORT) for treatment of diarrhoea

- 20.8% increase in the use of hand-washing facilities near latrines
- 32.9% increase in the practice of handwashing after defecation (from 43.1% to 76%)

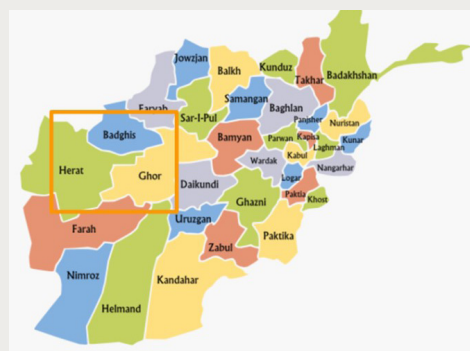
## Development Result 1: Strengthen Sector Governance and Financing

**WASH MANAGEMENT AND FINANCING:** To strengthen water sector governance, WVA establishes Water Management Groups (WMGs) to manage and maintain water systems and water fee collection mechanisms. WVA has also begun establishing local water utilities where Reverse Osmosis (RO) water treatment systems have been constructed. This is done in partnership with local private sector RO suppliers, with WVA enabling private sectors access to communities and facilitating ongoing relationships between private sector RO suppliers and communities. The RO systems have the capacity to generate an annual profit (income minus expenses) of up to \$34,975 per community, which provides significant capital injection into communities and supports the financial sustainability of local development activities. Following the successful implementation of these schemes, WVA is now seeking to connect the government to local suppliers, as well as train local government technical services on the system design for expansion across the country. This is of particular interest to the Afghanistan Government's Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Irrigation Programme (Ru-WatSIP) for integration under the Citizen's Charter programme.

**GOVERNMENT CAPACITY BUILDING:** WVA has established strong working relationships with the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livelihoods (MAIL), the Ministry of Education (MoE), and the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH). These relationships have enabled WVA to tap into the available government technical expertise to ensure quality assurance in delivering the interventions, as well as ensuring that they are aligned with government strategies and policies. Such engagements are done through the involvement of government technical specialists in quality control (compliance to standards), sharing of lessons learned, sharing of reports and evaluations, joint site visits, and building the capacity of government staff on relevant topics. WVA has signed MoUs with all relevant government ministries for its WASH work in communities, schools and health care facilities.

### WORLD VISION'S PRESENCE

World Vision's work is well-established in the Herat, Badghis and Ghor Provinces in the Western Region of Afghanistan, covering a population of 1,220,425 people in Herat, 264,267 people in Badghis, and 140,829 people in Ghor Province.



## Development Result 2: Increase Sustainable Access and Use of Sanitation and the Practice of Key Hygiene Behaviors

**SANITATION BEHAVIOR PROMOTION:** World Vision Afghanistan mobilizes communities to eliminate open defecation using the Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach in accordance with the Government of Afghanistan's 'Ending Open Defecation in Afghanistan by 2025' strategy. In addition, special focus is on sustainability and quality of latrine construction to ensure that the latrines meet government and Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) standards for improved latrines. In 2017, 13 communities were officially certified as Open Defecation Free (ODF), improving the sanitary conditions of 8,746 people.

**GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION:** Institutional sanitation facilities are gender-separated, disability-inclusive, on premises, have menstrual hygiene facilities, and meet WHO latrine stall ratio standards. Through gender impact analyses, gender considerations are incorporated into WASH projects. Equal representation is ensured through the creation of women-only WASH groups, which ensure that women's suggestions and concerns are incorporated into the projects and that female views on infrastructure design,

siting, maintenance and security are prioritized. World Vision also promotes access to water and sanitation facilities for people with disabilities (PWD) through inclusive infrastructure designs (e.g. appropriately sized ramps, door widths, cubicle spaces, hand rails, etc.). WVA has focused on disability inclusion for the last two years, aiming for all new and rehabilitated latrines to have at least one disability-inclusive facility.

**WASH IN HEALTH CARE FACILITIES:** With the support of the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), WVA recently partnered with Emory University on a multi-province WASH in Health Care Facilities (HCF) Assessment, which revealed poor sanitation infrastructures in HCF. Recognizing that many HCF septic systems are dilapidated and pose a significant public health risk, World Vision seeks to rehabilitate HCF sanitation systems.

**HYGIENE BEHAVIOR PROMOTION:** WVA's WASH programmes aim to ensure people are practicing proper hygiene behaviors, such as handwashing with soap and water at all critical times, safe water storage and handling, and other personal and environmental hygiene behaviors. The Designing for Behavior Change (DBC) tool is used to identify the determinants of desired key hygiene behaviors to ensure that behavior change programming is targeted and effective. Training is provided in communities, education facilities and HCF, with the support of community WASH groups (male and female) and religious leaders. A WASH in Islam curriculum has also been developed for religious leaders to promote positive hygiene behaviors through the lens of the Islamic faith. In 2017, 17 religious leaders participated in positive hygiene behavior workshops and have since been delivering these positive hygiene messages during Friday prayers. WVA is also in the final stages of developing a WASH module for a mobile education project that will provide hygiene education via mobile phones to illiterate women in the Western Region of Afghanistan.

WVA works with communities to ensure household hand-washing facilities are available. In 2017, community WASH groups trained 9,745 people on positive hygiene behaviors. Because of this training, 450 households (2,587 people) constructed hand-washing facilities equipped with soap and water. This community WASH group approach is critical to ensuring ongoing encouragement of proper hygiene and sanitation behaviors and regulations beyond the period of WVA intervention. WVA also constructed JMP standard hand-washing facilities in two education facilities and one health care facility, benefiting 1,073 male and 1,006 female students, and 29,200 patients per year. In 2017, WVA also introduced the Sesame Street WASH UP! children's hygiene education programme<sup>1</sup> in the Herat Street Children Centre and in 11 early childhood centres in Ghor, Herat and Badghis.

**LOCAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP:** In all WASH projects, local technicians receive training on system operations and maintenance to ensure the long-term sustainability of the systems. For difficult repairs on more technical systems (such as the RO units), WVA connects communities with the local private sector. These repairs are funded through user fees, thereby strengthening the local private sector. For example, through the RO systems, the community can make an annual projected profit of up to US\$34,975 from user fees, which can then be reinvested into other income-generating activities.

## Development Result 3: Increase Sustainable Access to Safe Drinking Water

**SUSTAINABLE DRINKING WATER:** In 2017, WVA provided improved access to safe water to over 14,215 people. This was achieved through the construction of five solar-powered mechanized (pipe network) drinking water systems, the rehabilitation of 14 damaged wells, and the construction of one solar-powered RO water treatment unit. WVA has also constructed solar-powered mechanized water systems in two schools and one health care facility, providing clean and safe drinking water to 1,073 male and 1,006 female students, and 29,200 patients per year. Minimum service levels are based on the Afghanistan national WASH standards and the water quality meets WHO and Afghanistan National Standard Authority (ANSA) standards. All water systems are constructed with community choice and participation, and all completed systems are operated by community organizations with a fee collection

<sup>1</sup> Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit educational organization behind Sesame Street™, has been partnering with World Vision since 2015 to help protect children from illness caused by dirty water and poor sanitation through the Sesame Street WASH UP! children's WASH education programme. WVA Afghanistan has been implementing an adapted version of the WASH UP! programme in the Western Region of the country, with plans to introduce a water conservation module to support water-saving behavior change.

scheme for system maintenance, which is in line with the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development's cost recovery approach. In 2017, WVGs were trained to maintain the systems WVA constructed. To ensure the sustainability of the source, large-scale groundwater extraction projects are accompanied by a groundwater recharge component. Check dams and macro-catchments have been constructed in the Qadis district of Badghis province to support groundwater recharge near the villages where World Vision has constructed drinking water supply systems. Over the last three to four years, this work has been funded by World Vision's private funding pool.

**WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT:** To ensure water quality, communities are trained on point-of-use water treatment, as well as safe water storage and handling. In cases of chemical contamination (e.g. fluoride contamination), WVA works with communities to construct solar-powered RO units or develop alternative water sources such as snow-melt and rainwater. In 2017, as a response to high groundwater salinity in an Afghan community setting, WVA constructed the first ever solar-powered RO unit with ultrafiltration. This is currently the only option available in Afghanistan for treatment of highly saline groundwater, which affects a large proportion of the country.

**WATER ACCESS IN EMERGENCIES:** In close coordination with the national and regional WASH clusters, WVA provides emergency water services (including water treatment options), sanitation facilities, hygiene items and hygiene promotion education to natural disaster and conflict-affected populations in the Western Region. WVA leverages its partnerships with the Government, WASH Cluster members, and private sector partners (such as Proctor & Gamble) to swiftly access and meet the needs of affected populations in hard-to-reach locations. In 2018, World Vision is providing emergency drinking water, sanitation facilities, hygiene items, and hygiene education through two UN OCHA-funded Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) projects to drought, flood and conflict-affected populations in Badghis Province, benefiting a total of 122,792 people.

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION:** In rural Afghan communities, WVA integrates Livelihoods and WASH programming by introducing improved environmental management techniques such as reforestation, river bank stabilization, and water catchments that support groundwater recharge. Since 2015, WVA has constructed more than 16 structures that promote groundwater recharge such as macro-catchments and check dams. Furthermore, through WVA's Livelihoods work, efficient water use is promoted using water-efficient drip irrigation schemes, thereby reducing pressure on scarce water resources. These initiatives are implemented in the same areas where WVA is conducting water supply projects to support water source sustainability. The fee collection mechanism set up by WVA's WVGs also discourages water wastage. To ensure water systems are protected from disaster, WVA constructs flood protection mechanisms such as the construction of gabions along flood-prone river banks. This has the added benefit of reducing erosion, which in turn helps reduce turbidity and improve water quality.

## Development Result 4: Improve Management of Water Resources

**MANAGING WATER CONFLICT:** Due to the increasingly scarce nature of water resources in Afghanistan, conflict over water access is inevitable. Thus, WVA works to mitigate conflict over shared water resources in Badghis, Ghor, and Herat Provinces in two ways:

- 1) Strengthening local conflict resolution mechanisms to mitigate water disputes between and within communities. People of influence, including village shuras (elders), local religious leaders, and community water waqils (water judges) are involved in these efforts.
- 2) Promoting water conservation, water use efficiency, and groundwater recharge to support water source sustainability and therefore reducing the likelihood of water insecurity.

**WATER CONSERVATION EFFORTS:** To support conservation efforts and ensure water source sustainability, WVA has introduced more efficient irrigation systems (drip irrigation), constructed micro and macro catchments to capture flood waters and support

groundwater recharge, and installed rainwater and snow-melt storage reservoirs ('dabbas') to ensure communities have alternative water sources during the summer months. WVA has also constructed kariz systems, an ancient Persian irrigation technology consisting of subterranean aqueducts that transport water from upland aquifers to lowland plains using only gravity as a power source. Increasingly, WVA is also focusing on an integrated approach to water resource management, including investigations into reforestation techniques that support groundwater recharge.

**MONITORING AND EVALUATION:** World Vision monitors project progress and evaluates performance to ensure its work is making a positive, lasting impact on the beneficiaries. Outcome-level data is collected and analyzed at the beginning, middle and end of a project to measure project impact. Output monitoring is in full alignment with the SDGs and the JMP WASH indicators, following World Vision's global SDG alignment process in 2016. Monitoring of key activities, inputs, and outputs is collected on an ongoing basis through a monthly, quarterly, and semi-annual reporting structure. Implementation monitoring is carried out through activity implementation reports, field visit reports, sectoral review reports, and monthly financial reports. Annual project reports also include impact photos, GPS coordinates, and water-quality information.

## Coordination and Collaboration

World Vision recognizes that these achievements cannot be accomplished alone and has developed strategic partnerships that enable the organization to build technical expertise, implement innovations, and collaborate to increase effectiveness in the field. World Vision partnerships include donors, government ministries, UN agencies, private sectors, civil society organizations and sector working groups. A partial list of significant partners includes:

- Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation & Development
- Ministry of Public Health
- Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation & Livestock
- Ministry of Education
- Water & Sanitation Group
- WASH Cluster
- Sesame Workshop
- Various local private sector organizations
- UN agencies (particularly UNICEF)
- Emory University
- Proctor & Gamble
- Various INGOs, local NGOs and civil societies (Community Development Councils, village shuras, religious leaders)

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