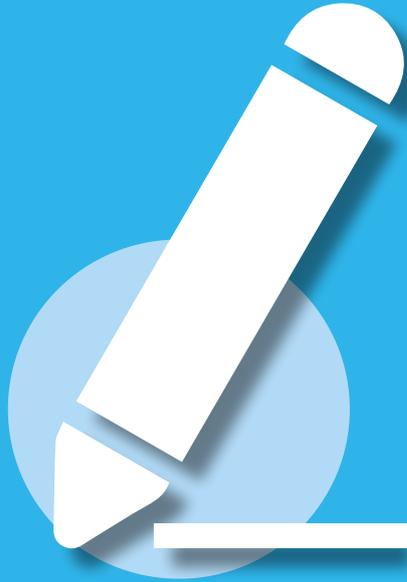




# WASH in Schools: Capacity Statement

Aimed towards achieving universal and equitable access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene for all children in areas that are hard-to-reach and susceptible to climate change in Bangladesh.



## Introduction:

With the collaborative effort from the government and other stakeholders, Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in providing access to basic water services and ending open-defecation. However, the country is yet to overcome challenges in ensuring WASH facilities at the institutional levels, especially in schools, to achieve national standards for WASH in schools and the SDGs.

Ensuring adequate WASH facilities in schools is crucial for achieving SDG 4 (quality education) and 6 (clean water and sanitation). Access to WASH services is even more crucial during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic for effective prevention and control of infection.

Since its inception, the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) has been included as a component in overall activities of BRAC. In 2006, WASH in schools was included as an important component when BRAC launched a separate, integrated WASH programme as part of a national effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to further support the national targets for water and sanitation.

As part of the programme intervention, 2.71 million people have received access to safe drinking water sources through context-specific water options/ technologies, while 44.18 million people received access to hygienic latrines. Additionally, 3.98 million students in 6,011 (out of 20,467) secondary schools were also reached out across the country as of June 2021. This was done through different WASH services, including safe drinking water, handwashing stations, gender and disability-inclusive latrines, menstrual hygiene management and hygiene education. Out of the 6,011 secondary schools, 905 are girls' schools (which is 27.94% of the total 3,239 girls' secondary schools across the country). In addition, 53,441 teachers, 55,655 student brigade members and 45,633 school management committee members received training on WASH in schools, while 45 schools received water treatment plants.



# According to National Hygiene Baseline survey 2018



96%

secondary schools (overall 92%) had improved and functional drinking water sources.

80%



secondary co-education schools (overall 65%) had separate, improved and unlocked latrines for boys and girls.

survey



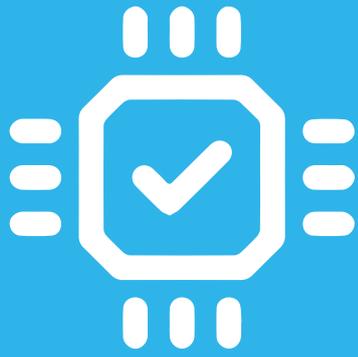
47%

secondary co-education schools (overall 39%) had separate, improved and unlocked latrines for boys and girls with soap and water available for handwashing.

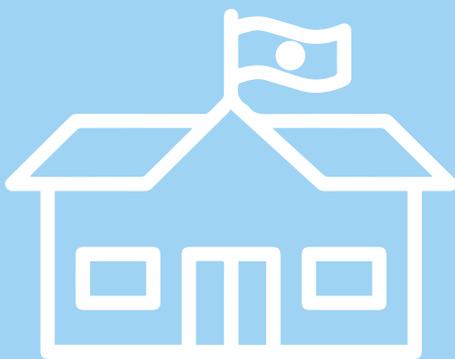
22%



girls from secondary schools (overall 30%) missed school with a mean number of 2.5 days in each menstrual cycle.



## Components of WASH in schools



The criteria below are being followed by the WASH programme while ensuring support provisions for schools:

- Government-approved girls' and co-education secondary schools
- Schools with poor WASH facilities (latrine to student ratio is high, no running water supply, etc.)
- Willing to share the cost of WASH infrastructure
- Committed to ensure proper operation and maintenance of installed WASH facilities

## Safe drinking water and handwashing station

Separate drinking water stations (treated for excess iron, salinity, arsenic, etc, where needed) and handwashing facilities with soap have been installed to facilitate students to consume safe water. The stations have a piped network as each station caters to at least three students at a time.



*Drinking water and hand-washing station*

# Gender and disability– inclusive latrines



Separate latrines with running water facilities have been constructed for both girls and boys. The latrines are made to be inclusive of people living with disabilities. The location and design have been selected to prioritise the privacy of adolescent girls. The technology being used for the latrines is a double pit offset with running water. In order to ensure handwashing with soap, wash basins have been installed with mirrors and soap trays. Tiled floor and wall have been used to ensure easy cleaning.

*Gender and disability-inclusive latrine with menstrual hygiene management facilities*

## Menstrual hygiene management



During the installation of hygienic latrines for girls, covered waste bins have been placed inside the latrines, while a dumper is placed outside to ensure proper disposal of sanitary napkins and pads. Once the dumpers become full, the contents are burnt and hygienically disposed of.



## Hygiene education

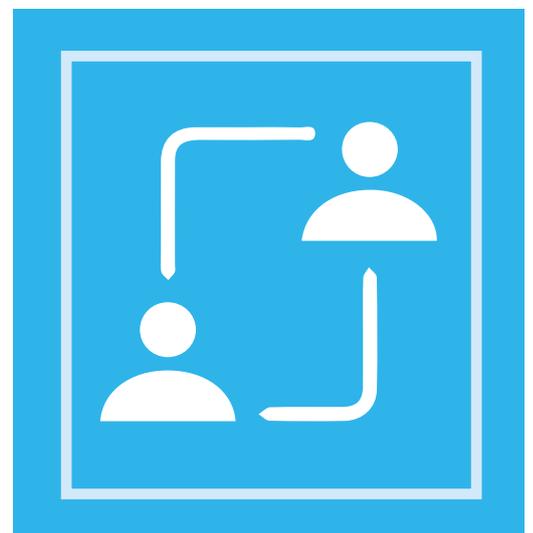
Schools conduct hygiene education sessions regularly, so that students practise appropriate WASH behaviours at schools and carry the acquired knowledge to their families and communities. Two teachers (one male and one female) from each school receive training on WASH issues with emphasis on menstrual hygiene and handwashing. The training gives particular importance on the safe handling of drinking water at home and at school, proper use of hygienic latrines, regular handwashing with soap, healthy practises during menstruation, operation and maintenance of WASH facilities in addition to monitoring school WASH activities, and the allocation of budget for the

maintenance of WASH facilities in schools. After receiving the training, teachers are required to prepare plans (rosters) to deliver messages on health and hygiene. A module and a flipchart are used in order to maintain the dissemination of messages.

To ensure the continuous availability of soap and sanitary napkins at schools, 'Soap Drive' and 'Napkin Drive' are annually organised. On these days, each student brings a bar of soap and a napkin, respectively, which are stored in the school for the whole year.

## Advocacy with the government

To ensure proper advocacy at the central level, BRAC liaises with the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE). To ensure it at the local level, the liaison is maintained with the Secondary Education Officer of the sub-districts. In 2015, the Ministry of Education published a circular focusing on the improvement of sanitation conditions in secondary and higher secondary schools, madrassas, and technical and vocational institutions. In that circular, a number of BRAC WASH in school components were included. BRAC being a steering committee member of the Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) platform, worked with the Government of Bangladesh in developing the national MHM strategy, where ensuring menstrual hygiene management at the school levels is heavily emphasised.



# Solution



360

## Financial arrangement through cost sharing

Installation of WASH facilities at schools is done through cost sharing with the school management committees (SMCs) and BRAC. To maintain financial transparency during construction, a three-member purchase committee is formed involving representatives from the BRAC WASH programme, Finance and Accounts Department, and any other BRAC programme.

## Provision of appropriate technology

Iron/arsenic/saline removal plants are installed in areas with high concentration of these.

## Formation of student brigade

A student brigade is formed in each school with 24 students from Class Six to Class Nine (with equal numbers of girls and boys in co-education schools, while 24 girls are selected in girls-only schools). The student brigades are responsible for the proper use and maintenance of latrines as well as the total cleanliness of the school premises with the assistance from their teachers.

## Formation of school WASH committee

In addition to the student brigade, a 14-member school WASH committee is formed in each school, with the headmaster as the chairperson, and a female teacher as the member secretary. Representatives of the SMCs, parents and teachers, caretakers and students are selected as members of the committee in order to ensure equal representation at all levels. The overall responsibility of the committee is managing, maintaining and mobilising funds for WASH. The committee meets regularly to review the status of WASH activities.

## Capacity building

To further sensitise the students on WASH components, eight students and two teachers receive a three-day residential training at BRAC Learning Centres located in different parts of Bangladesh. During the training, the student brigade members get a general understanding of WASH issues with emphasis on menstrual hygiene management along with regular operations and maintenance of WASH facilities. In most cases, the headmasters of the schools participate with their students.

## Fund for operation and maintenance (O&M)

A fund with a minimum value of BDT 15,000 is deposited in a joint bank account for operation and maintenance (O&M) of WASH facilities. Schools are encouraged to regularly raise funds for O&M and deposit them in the bank.

## Integration with BRAC's education and health programmes

**BRAC Health, Nutrition and Population Programme (HNPP):** A linkage has been made between secondary schools and shasthya shebika (community health volunteers) who sell sanitary napkins to ensure regular supply of this essential product in schools.

**BRAC Education Programme (BEP):** A total of **2,990 BRAC primary school** teachers and **59 managers of the education programme** received training on basic WASH issues. They are disseminating messages on the use of safe water and sanitation and the importance of hygiene practises (including menstrual hygiene management) to students in classroom sessions, parents' meetings and Adolescent Club meetings in the catchment areas. Guidelines for WASH in schools were developed by BRAC's WASH and education programmes, as well as modules for the training of the teachers and the standards of WASH facilities at schools were set to align with the national standards.



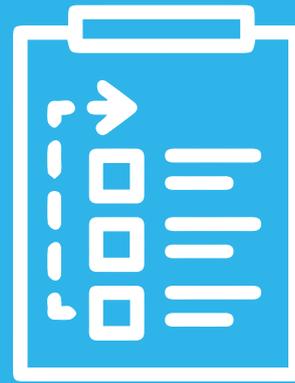
## Responding to Crisis

WASH support is prioritized during any emergency, be it at the household or institutional level. **WASH facilities have been repaired in 120 schools** affected by Cyclone Amphan and the Monsoon flood in 2020. WASH facilities in Cox's Bazar at different educational set-ups (schools, child friendly spaces, learning centres etc.) both at the camps and adjacent host communities have been ensured since the start of the Rohingya influx in 2017.

### As of December 2020:

- WASH facilities in 18 schools have been repaired/ provided for **12,824 students** (5,166 boys and 7,658 girls) of the host communities.
- WASH facilities in 30 child-friendly spaces and learning centers were provided for **2,458 Rohingya children** (982 boys and 1,476 girls).
- **298 hygiene awareness sessions** were conducted at both the camps and the host communities for young learners.

In order to strengthen handwashing behavior amongst children, parents, teachers and members of the community, different innovative and inclusive models of handwashing stations were installed at the premises of 120 educational institutions under the Hygiene Behavior Change Coalition (HBCC) project. School management committees of these institutions are playing important roles for ensuring proper operation and maintenance of the installed handwashing stations.



## Priorities for the next five years:

- Ensuring affordable, sustainable water facilities to school children in areas that are climate-vulnerable and have scarcity of water which can be replicated and scaled up.
- Ensuring sufficient, accessible, private, secure, clean and culturally appropriate latrines for children to achieve national standard (one latrine for 50 children), which is currently 1:107 for secondary schools (overall 1:113).
- Ensuring menstrual hygiene management education and facilities at school (separate latrines for girls, menstrual hygiene products and menstrual waste disposal facilities).
- Ensuring handwashing facilities with running water and soap for all students.
- Raising awareness on operation and maintenance of WASH facilities at schools.
- Strengthen collaboration with the government and other stakeholders.
- Research and monitoring for better planning and implementation of WASH in school programming.

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### References

- [1. Pocket book on Bangladesh education statistics 2017](#)
- [2. Bangladesh National Hygiene Survey 2018](#)

# Experience with Partners



Kingdom of the Netherlands

With the support (86.13 Million Euro/101 Million USD) from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands as a component of integrated WASH programme, 4,233 schools in 172 sub–districts were reached through installation of separate latrines. The latrines came with menstrual hygiene facilities for girls, training and orientation of student brigades and school management committees, as well as extensive hygiene promotion activities benefitting 2,624,460 students from 2007 to 2020. In addition to that, 495 schools from 250 sub–districts were reached through repairs and improvement of the existing WASH facilities and hygiene promotion activities benefitting 277,952 students from 2017 to 2020.



With the support (USD 37.4 million) from DFID and DFAT under Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) as a component of integrated WASH programme 1,354 schools in 73 sub–districts were reached through installation of separate latrines with menstrual hygiene facilities for girls, training and orientation of student brigades and school management committees as well as extensive hygiene promotion activities benefitting 839,480 students from 2011 to 2015.



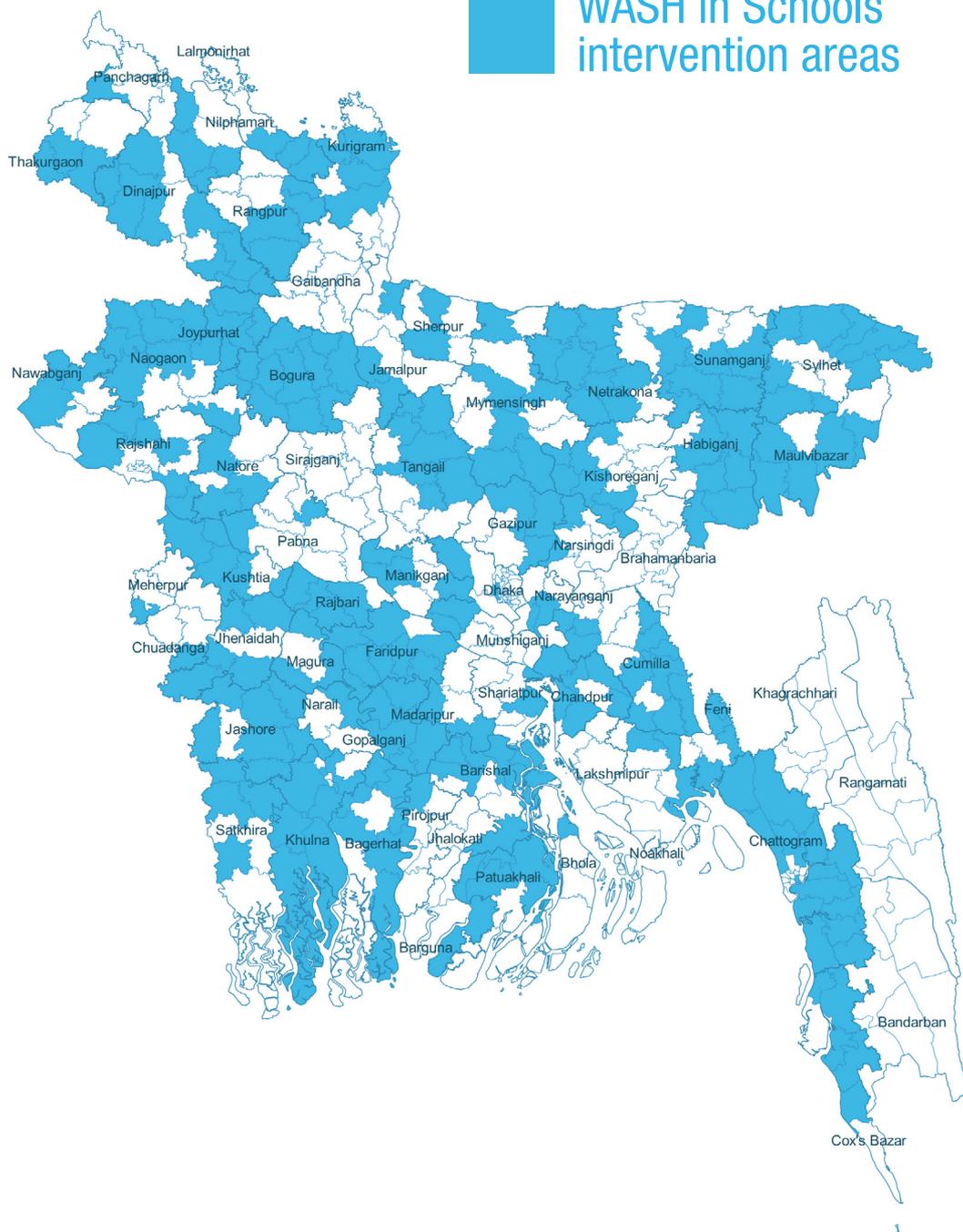
charity: water

With the support (USD 6.95 million) from Charity: Water, 1,186 schools in 96 sub– districts were reached through safe drinking water stations with handwashing facilities, installation of disability–inclusive latrines with menstrual hygiene facilities for girls and disability–inclusive separate latrines for boys, training and orientation of student brigades and school management committees, as well as extensive hygiene promotion activities benefitting 704,621 students from 2014 to 2021.



With the support (USD 259,803) from Splash, 71 schools in urban areas were reached through safe drinking water stations with handwashing facilities, installation of separate latrines with menstrual hygiene facilities for girls and separate latrines for boys, training and orientation of student brigades and school management committees as well as extensive hygiene promotion activities benefitting 44,020 students in 2014.

## WASH in Schools intervention areas



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