

What we do - WASH services

BRAC is a development success story. Founded in Bangladesh, we are by most measures the largest non-governmental organisation in the world, an innovator in poverty eradication and an outstanding social enterprise. Best known for our community-based approach and the scale of our programmes, we have created opportunities for millions of people - mostly women - to set in motion lasting change.

Active since 2006 we've ensured that 39 million people, many of whom live in hard to reach areas, have access to a hygienic latrine and 2.3 million people have access to a safe water source*. There has been a reduction in open defecation in Bangladesh from 34% in 1990 to 1% in 2015.



Credit: BRAC
Caption: Village women are collecting arsenic free safe drinking water

“It has been a privilege to work as a partner with one of the largest and most successful WASH programmes in the world.”

Patrick Moriarty,
Chief Executive Officer, IRC

Our model

More than 65,000 village WASH committees have been formed across Bangladesh giving the community an independent role to manage WASH related development. Each committee is made up of 11 members – six women and five men – and has the mandate to assess the existing water and sanitation situation of the village and identify issues. Committee members are given leadership training and are responsible for identifying ultra poor households that need additional support.

To increase access to safe water, we have established water safety plans, installed deep tube wells, tested water quality and provided loans for tube well platform construction which protects water sources from being contaminated. Arsenic and saline-prone areas are prioritised in which alternative water technologies, such as arsenic removal filters, iron removal plants, pond sand filters and piped water supply systems are implemented in schools and communities.

BRAC provides technical assistance to those who can afford and are willing to construct latrines, ensuring proper design and site selection. Loans are provided to those who cannot afford to pay the full cost of hygienic latrines. Two-pit latrine construction materials, including superstructures and mini water tanks, are offered to ultra poor families free of cost.

BRAC cluster meetings create awareness about the use of safe water, hygienic latrines and good hygiene practices. Religious leaders are trained to promote hygiene activities and local media and popular theatre are used to deliver crucial messages to communities.

In the media

BRAC enters sanitation Hall of Fame

At the 14th World Toilet Summit 2015, BRAC received the “Hall of Fame Award” for significant contributions to the sanitation sector in Bangladesh.

(World Toilet Organization, January 2015)

Islands of Hope Amid Flash Floods

“BRAC is constantly discovering new frontiers for progress -- communities and households even more marginalized than anyone had ever imagined.”

(The Huffington Post, Nov 2013)

Voice of Success in BRAC WASH communities

“People are developing a taste for healthy living. They want improvement” Village Elder, Bangladesh.

(IRC, 2015)

*data from June 2015



Access to WASH remains crucial to our integrated approach to development. At first glance it appears to be a simple intervention but in reality it remains a complex social problem amid a backdrop of 2.5 billion people (or one in three of the world's population) without access to adequate sanitation. The World Health Organisation states that a single U.S. Dollar allocated to water, sanitation and hygiene equates to a saving of \$4.3 in health care costs, illustrating the immense impact of WASH activities.

Caption: A mother teaches her daughter how to use a hygienic latrine

Empowering women, through WASH

BRAC WASH places the inclusion of women at the centre of its decision-making processes, including site selection of latrines and water points. The programme also raises awareness on proper menstrual hygiene among women and adolescent girls.

Across Bangladesh, Village WASH Committees (VWC) oversee the management of the programme in their area, catalyse behavioural change and forge links with stakeholders and the government. Through this network BRAC is able to spread WASH messages, motivate good hygiene practice and contribute towards building a stronger community. Committees map out water points and latrines, monitor and maintain hygienic toilets and safe water sources, coupled with the identification of repairs and new installations.

Maria, a tenth grade student in Hobirbari, Bhaluka, said ***“being a VWC member gives me the feeling of being someone who people will listen to. I enjoy the leadership role even though I am young”***

Mobasshera Akhter Rumi is a mother of two and exemplifies what BRAC is achieving not only in WASH, but for the empowerment of women. Her involvement as a member secretary of the area's VWC from 2006 to 2011 grew into an elected Union representative role at the local authority body.

“The committee members really insisted that I join the election, and it gave me confidence. After that, I conducted a personal census to evaluate the chances of me winning the election.” Mobasshera Akhter Rumi

As a direct consequence of BRAC's intervention Mobasshera holds an elected political position and has been able to benefit from a BRAC leadership course. Mobasshera had never considered a political position before. However, her popularity and profile in the area grow unhindered and was nurtured by the support of her committee. She believes even when programmes come to an end the legacy of BRAC's WASH lessons will live on and women, by taking up leadership roles alongside men, will continue to build a better society.



Caption: A village WASH committee meeting, Bangladesh

BRAC's WASH partnerships

Project	Donors and Partners	Amount	Description
First phase WASH programme	Netherlands Government	£34.5million	Operating WASH programme across 152 sub-districts in Bangladesh
Second phase of WASH programme	Netherlands Government Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation DFID/AusAid	€27 million £10.8 million £24.34 million	Targeting more isolated populations in an additional 25 sub-districts in 2011 along with the original 152 sub-districts already covered and expanded to another 73 additional sub-districts in 2012
WASH in rural secondary schools	charity: water	£78,1176	Safe drinking water sources, separate latrines for boys and girls (with menstrual hygiene facilities) and hygiene education for 250 secondary schools in rural areas of Chittagong and Khulna Divisions
WASH in urban schools	Splash	£169,126	Working with urban schools to provide safe water, sanitation and hygiene education among the poorest children in Dhaka and Chittagong cities
Long-term partnership	IRC	-	Partners since 2006, the collaboration has evolved into a partnership based on mutual trust and respect. IRC contributes to several aspects of the WASH programme, including monitoring and documentation
Partnership	The World Toilet Organisation (WTO)	-	WTO is committed to improving toilet and sanitation conditions worldwide, empowering individuals through education and training and building safe sanitation facilities
Partnership to provide subsidized SaTo pans to BRAC WASH-supported rural sanitation centres	American Standard and RFL Plastics Ltd	243,425 SaTo pans	Research, develop and distribute a pioneering sanitary toilet pan - the SaTo pan - that is easy to use and inexpensive to produce locally.

The BRAC WASH programme places significant emphasis on providing WASH support to schools. The programme has supported over 5,000 secondary schools in rural areas with separate latrines for boys and girls and menstrual hygiene management facilities; safe water options in over 300 schools both in rural and urban areas; and hygiene education in all schools in programme areas. To ensure sustainability of these WASH facilities, the programme sets up student brigades and school WASH committees with responsibility for maintenance of the facilities.



Caption: Female students of Kabi Nazrul High School

Credit: BRAC

There wasn't a proper toilet for the 300 female students from Kabi Nazrul High School in the Manikganj district to use. With support from BRAC WASH, the school authorities constructed two separate latrines, only for girls, in a convenient but private place with a water source and disposal facilities.

At a glance

Area	Started in	WASH Committees	No of people with access to hygienic latrine	No of people with access to clean water supply	Schools provided with WASH support
152 sub-districts	2006	39,780	30.2 million	1.97 million	3,966
25 sub districts	2011	6,517	2.4 million	0.15 million	267
73 sub-districts	2012	19,269	6.8 million	0.19 million	1,246
Dhaka and Chittagong cities	2014	-	-	-	71
Total		65,566	39.4 million	2.3 million	5,550

Although every effort has been made to verify the accuracy of this information, readers are urged to check independently on matters of specific interest and report any discrepancies to info@bracuk.net. This document was updated on the 30th November 2015 and will be revised annually.

Key donors for BRAC WASH



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands



What's next?

Since 2006, BRAC has had tremendous success in delivering WASH interventions across Bangladesh. From 2016 - 2020, there will be greater emphasis on water and alternative water technologies.

Innovative WASH programmes will include commercial water vending in coastal areas, solid waste management, fecal sludge management, commercialized water testing, enhanced secondary school programmes and alternative sanitation technologies at scale.

We are looking for partners and donors who want to start WASH interventions in other BRAC countries. Given our impact and ability to scale we are confident millions more people can be reached with WASH services.



Caption: Community children now adopted hygienic practices in Kapasia, Bangladesh

Credit: BRAC

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