Improving Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene in Southwest Bangladesh

**WASHplus in Bangladesh**
WASHplus received USAID field support ($4 million to date, $6 million projected over three years) to improve water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) in southwestern Bangladesh. This support aims to:

- **Increase access** to sustainable safe WASH solutions in marginal and geographically challenging districts, including increased access to water to reduce burden on women and girls, improved sanitation that considers women's privacy and safety, and menstrual hygiene management in home and school.
- **Build community and local government capacity** to operate and maintain water and sanitation facilities and demand increased allocation and pro-poor targeting of national and local government funds and community contributions to ensure sustainability of project interventions and impact.
- **Strengthen coordinated WASH-nutrition programming** in support of broader Feed the Future objectives. For this last objective, WASHplus will work in collaboration with other USAID implementing partners like SPRING and SHIKHA (a USAID-funded follow on to Alive & Thrive) to integrate hand washing before food preparation and feeding, food safety, and safe disposal of infant feces into more traditional nutrition and livelihood activities.

**Project Activities, Partners, Objectives**
Activities will focus in four *upazillas* in southwest Bangladesh, Char Fasson, Daulatkhan, Galachipa, and Kalapara. These upazillas coincide with Feed the Future intervention areas.

Access to appropriate and, most importantly, gender-sensitive WASH facilities would have a significant positive impact on both the daily lives and long-term prospects of millions of women and girls currently living without them.1
In order for women and girls to live healthy, productive, and dignified lives, it is essential that they are able to manage menstrual bleeding effectively. This requires access to appropriate water, sanitation and hygiene services.\(^2\)

WASHplus will strengthen and support local governments to this end.

In addition to the three project objectives stated above, WASHplus plans to work with a “coalition of the willing”—all stakeholders interested in exploring the viability of bringing a commercial hand washing station to the Bangladesh market. Fixed hand washing stations at the point of use are closely linked with consistent and correct hand washing at key times, and other South Asian countries have identified the demand for simple, yet aspirational, devices that facilitate washing.

Evidence-Based and Small Doable Actions Approaches

WASHplus focuses on the interrelated role of hardware, software, and enabling environment in applying evidence-based approaches, beyond hardware coverage, to ensure consistent and correct practice of hand washing, safe feces disposal, and safe water from “source to mouth,” thus realizing the desired health and other socio-economic objectives associated with improved WASH. One of its major approaches to behavior change builds on the concept of the sanitation ladder to identify a series of small doable actions, feasible yet effective actions applicable to the resource-constrained context. These small doables are negotiated with householders to move them from current practice toward the ideal.

Sustained WASH gains require a capable and engaged local government working within communities to each do their part in establishing and maintaining systems.

The USAID WASHplus project supports healthy households and communities by creating and delivering interventions that lead to improvements in WASH and indoor air pollution (IAP). This five-year project (2010-2015), funded through USAID’s Bureau for Global Health and led by FHI 360 in partnership with CARE and Winrock International, uses at-scale programming approaches to reduce diarrheal diseases and acute respiratory infections, the two top killers of children under age five globally. WASHplus works both globally and in six countries worldwide.

For additional information, contact Selina Ferdous, WASHplus Project Coordinator at SelinaFerdous@wateraid.org, Mustafa Kamal Sikder, WASHplus Behavior Change & Nutrition Integration Specialist at asikder@fhi360.org, or Julia Rosenbaum, WASHplus Deputy Director at jrosenbaum@fhi360.org.