



**Integrated Community Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Improvement
(ICOWASH) Project in Northern Ghana**

MODULE 1

INTRODUCTION TO WASH



What WASH?

- ❑ WASH is an acronym that stands for Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene, and it encompasses a range of interconnected activities and interventions aimed at ensuring access to clean water, proper sanitation facilities, and promoting good hygiene practices.
- ❑ WASH, an essential concept that plays a crucial role in public health and well-being.
- ❑ WASH refers to the set of practices and services required to protect and improve human health by ensuring access to safe drinking water, adequate sanitation, and promoting hygiene behaviours.
- ❑ It is a comprehensive approach that addresses three interconnected components: water, sanitation, and hygiene.

Statistics

- ❑ According to the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF, approximately 2.2 billion people worldwide lack access to safely managed drinking water services, while 4.2 billion people lack access to safely managed sanitation services.
- ❑ Lack of access to clean water and sanitation contributes to the spread of diseases, leading to approximately 842,000 deaths each year.

Component 1: Water

❑ Importance of clean water:

- ✓ Access to safe and clean drinking water is a fundamental human right and a prerequisite for a healthy life.
- ✓ Lack of access to clean water can lead to waterborne diseases, malnutrition, and other health issues.

❑ Objectives:

- ✓ Ensure availability and sustainable management of water resources.
- ✓ Provide safe and reliable water supply systems for drinking, cooking, and personal hygiene.

Component 1: Water – Cont.

Statistics:

- ❑ Globally, over 785 million people lack even basic drinking water services, forcing them to rely on unsafe water sources.
- ❑ Contaminated water sources are a leading cause of diarrheal diseases, which account for 1.6 million deaths annually, mostly affecting children under the age of five.

Component 2: Sanitation

❑ Importance of proper sanitation:

- ✓ Sanitation refers to the safe disposal of human waste and the provision of facilities for personal hygiene.
- ✓ Inadequate sanitation facilities can lead to the spread of diseases, environmental pollution, and social issues.

❑ Objectives:

- ✓ Improve access to sanitation facilities, such as toilets and wastewater management systems.
- ✓ Promote safe and hygienic practices related to waste management and excreta disposal.

Component 2: Sanitation – Cont.

Statistics:

- ❑ Globally, around 4.2 billion people lack access to safely managed sanitation services, while 673 million people still practice open defecation.
- ❑ Poor sanitation contributes to the transmission of diseases like cholera, typhoid, and hepatitis A, causing approximately 432,000 deaths per year.

Component 3: Hygiene

❑ Importance of good hygiene practices:

- ✓ Hygiene practices are essential for preventing the spread of diseases and maintaining overall well-being.
- ✓ Promoting handwashing, proper food handling, and personal hygiene habits can significantly reduce the risk of infections.

❑ Objectives:

- ✓ Promote behaviors that ensure personal hygiene, such as handwashing with soap, safe food handling, and regular bathing.
- ✓ Raise awareness about the importance of hygiene practices in preventing diseases.

Component 3: Hygiene – Cont.

Statistics:

- ❑ It is estimated that handwashing with soap can reduce diarrheal diseases by up to 47% and respiratory infections by up to 25%.
- ❑ Despite this, around 40% of the global population lacks access to basic handwashing facilities at home.

Interconnections and Impact of WASH

WASH interventions have significant interconnections and impact on various aspects of individuals' lives and communities. Especially in the areas of:

- Health
- Education
- Gender Equality
- Environmental Sustainability

Health (Improved health and well-being):

- ❑ Diarrheal diseases, primarily caused by contaminated water and poor sanitation, account for over 1.6 million deaths annually, mostly affecting children under the age of five.
- ❑ Improved access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene practices lead to reduced disease burden and better overall health outcomes.
- ❑ Adequate WASH interventions, including handwashing with soap, can reduce diarrheal diseases by up to 47% and respiratory infections by up to 25%.
- ❑ Promoting good hygiene practices can also prevent the spread of other infectious diseases like cholera, typhoid, and hepatitis A.
- ❑ For example, a study conducted in Bangladesh found that improved sanitation facilities reduced diarrheal diseases by 37%.

Education (Reduced absenteeism and improved learning outcomes)

- ❑ Adequate WASH facilities in schools contribute to a conducive learning environment, particularly for girls.
- ❑ According to UNICEF, around 272 million school days are missed annually due to waterborne diseases.
- ❑ Girls' attendance and retention rates increase when schools provide separate toilets and menstrual hygiene management facilities.
- ❑ Studies have shown that WASH interventions in schools lead to improved student health, increased attendance, and better academic performance.

Gender Equality

- ❑ WASH interventions that prioritize gender-sensitive sanitation facilities can contribute to enhancing women's safety, dignity, and overall well-being.
- ❑ WASH interventions that include menstrual hygiene management facilities and promote awareness can help break the stigma around menstruation, enabling girls to attend school regularly and fully participate in daily activities.
- ❑ Women and girls in Sub-Saharan Africa collectively spend about 200 million hours each day fetching water. Time spent on water collection limits opportunities for education, income-generating activities, and personal development. Improving access to clean water sources closer to households through WASH interventions reduces the burden of water collection, allowing women and girls to engage in other productive activities and pursue their aspirations.
- ❑ Ensuring women's involvement in planning, implementing, and managing WASH projects promotes gender equality and ensures that their needs and perspectives are considered.
- ❑ Women's participation in WASH programs can also lead to innovative solutions and community-driven initiatives.

Gender Equality – Cont.

- ❑ In many societies, women and girls face unique challenges due to the lack of adequate sanitation facilities.
- ❑ Access to WASH services can empower women and girls, ensuring their safety, dignity, and reducing the burden of water collection.
- ❑ Approximately 1.8 billion women and girls worldwide lack access to basic sanitation facilities, forcing them to resort to open defecation or unsafe alternatives.
- ❑ Lack of private and safe sanitation facilities exposes women and girls to the risk of harassment, assault, and violence.
- ❑ In many societies, women and girls are responsible for water collection, which can take up valuable time and prevent them from pursuing education or income-generating activities.
- ❑ Menstruation is a natural process that has a significant impact on women and girls' lives, particularly in contexts where there is a lack of proper facilities and knowledge.
- ❑ Access to WASH services and involvement in decision-making processes related to WASH can empower women and promote their active participation in society.

Environmental Sustainability

- ❑ Proper water and waste management contribute to environmental conservation and sustainable development.
- ❑ According to the United Nations, water scarcity affects more than 40% of the global population, and this number is expected to rise due to population growth and climate change.
- ❑ Unsustainable water use and pollution pose significant threats to ecosystems and biodiversity.
- ❑ Approximately 80% of wastewater generated globally flows back into the ecosystem without adequate treatment.
- ❑ Untreated wastewater contaminates freshwater sources and negatively impacts ecosystems and public health.

Environmental Sustainability – Cont.

- ❑ Water pollution, primarily caused by inadequate sanitation and improper waste disposal, poses a significant threat to aquatic ecosystems and biodiversity.
- ❑ Overexploitation of water resources can lead to the degradation of habitats and the loss of aquatic species.
- ❑ Climate change exacerbates water scarcity, increases the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, and affects the availability and quality of water resources.
- ❑ Vulnerable communities, particularly in developing countries, are disproportionately affected by climate change impacts on water availability.

Environmental Sustainability – Cont.

- ❑ By promoting efficient water use, water conservation, and proper wastewater management, WASH interventions contribute to the sustainable availability of water resources for future generations.
- ❑ WASH interventions that focus on wastewater treatment and reuse not only reduce pollution but also provide alternative water sources for agricultural irrigation, reducing the pressure on freshwater resources.
- ❑ By ensuring proper sanitation and waste management, as well as promoting sustainable water use, WASH interventions help safeguard ecosystems, protect biodiversity, and maintain the balance of natural systems.
- ❑ Climate-resilient WASH approaches, such as rainwater harvesting, water conservation, and climate-smart sanitation systems, help communities adapt to changing conditions, reduce vulnerability, and ensure long-term access to water and sanitation services.

Enhanced Dignity And Safety:

- ❑ Access to WASH services promotes dignity, privacy, and safety, particularly for women and girls.
- ❑ Approximately 2.3 billion people worldwide lack access to basic sanitation facilities, which often leads to open defecation and compromises privacy and dignity.
- ❑ Inadequate sanitation facilities can expose women and girls to the risk of harassment, assault, and violence.
- ❑ Providing safe and gender-sensitive sanitation facilities contributes to empowering women and ensuring their safety.

Conclusion

- ❑ WASH is a comprehensive approach that addresses the critical elements of water, sanitation, and hygiene.
- ❑ It plays a vital role in promoting public health, reducing poverty, improving education, and achieving sustainable development goals.
- ❑ By investing in WASH initiatives, we can make a significant impact on the well-being of individuals and communities around the world.
- ❑ By implementing sustainable WASH practices, we can ensure the availability and quality of water for future generations and contribute to the overall health and well-being of the planet.

Thank you!

