

# Exploring Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

## Overview

We are exploring water, sanitation, and hygiene (WS&H) as a potential long-term area of grant-making for the foundation. As part of this learning initiative, we are making limited and focused grants to determine if there are effective, sustainable, and scalable solutions that are consistent with the foundation's principles. The findings from these grants and our related learning activities will also help us to assess whether the foundation's approach to complex problems (e.g., promoting innovative solutions, working through partners) aligns well with the opportunities for making an impact in the WS&H sector.

*Please note that WS&H is not, and may not become, a long-term area of giving for the foundation.*



## The Challenge

More than 1 billion people across the developing world cannot get clean water for drinking or cooking. Furthermore, more than 2.5 billion people do not have access to even the most basic sanitation facilities such as latrines, and billions do not follow fundamental personal hygiene practices such as washing their hands with soap. Sanitation and hygiene, which get far less attention than clean water, matter because even households with access to clean water can still contaminate their water and food if they don't safely dispose of feces or wash their hands with soap before eating.

The impact of this problem is profound. Unsafe water, sanitation, and hygiene are a leading cause of avoidable death and disease, especially among children. Every year, 1.5 million children under the age of 5 die from diarrhea and other water-related diseases. Unsafe WS&H also have serious economic and social consequences. It is estimated that those who do not have access to clean water spend the equivalent of one working month every year searching for water. This is time they could otherwise spend earning income or studying. Women and girls suffer most from poor WS&H: for example, many girls don't attend school because they must spend the school day finding water for their families or because school buildings lack adequate sanitation facilities.

## Our Approach

The goal of our WS&H learning initiative is to determine if there are interventions with the potential to be:

- **Effective** in addressing the health, economic, and social inequities that result from poor WS&H;
- **Sustainable** in terms of long-term operations and financing; and,
- **Scalable** to reach hundreds of millions of people in the developing world.

Identifying solutions to the WS&H problem that meet all three criteria while being consistent with our core principles is central to our approach.

As we explore the WS&H sector, we are being guided by several broad principles:

- **Learning.** The main focus of our WS&H initiative is learning. We learn by listening to practitioners from a wide range of disciplines, funding a small number of grants that test different approaches, and monitoring the results. These grants should generate solid evidence about which interventions are most likely to be effective, sustainable, and scalable.
- **Impact.** We want to improve the health of the poor as well as their economic and social well-being. Simply installing taps and toilets, without making sure they are maintained and used properly, is not sufficient to ensure sustained impact.

- **The Underserved.** Currently, 80 percent of those without adequate WS&H live in rural areas or small towns. Given demographic trends, the urban poor will face the greatest problems in the future. We target the underserved poor in all of these settings.
- **Incentives and Motivations.** Sustainable solutions must provide clear incentives for providers to deliver safe, affordable WS&H services. They must also spur demand for WS&H services among consumers. The key to increasing demand is a better understanding of users' motivations.
- **Levers for Change.** Delivering better WS&H services at scale requires a thorough understanding of the complex systems through which those services are provided and used. We hope to identify the levers for long-term change in these systems so that we can work effectively with others to have the greatest possible impact.
- **Partners.** We will engage with those partners in the private, public, and NGO sectors that offer the best opportunities to deliver results. We value the perspectives, experience, and candor of our grantees and 'thought partners,' and we appreciate the generosity of the organizations and experts that are helping us to learn.



Photo: Guy Stubbs/Water and Sanitation Program

## Areas of Learning

Our exploration of the WS&H sector is currently being guided by five questions that we believe will help us identify the most effective, sustainable, and scalable approaches. Several of these questions have been informed by a recent 'landscaping' of existing and emerging WS&H technologies and service delivery.

1. **Stimulating Demand:** Can better approaches to stimulating demand encourage people to adopt and sustain good sanitary and hygiene practices?
2. **Improving Technologies and Products:** Can technologies and products that are cheaper, more effective, or easier to use help address unmet WS&H needs?
3. **Delivering Market-based Services:** Can approaches that rely on the market deliver better WS&H products and services at scale?
4. **Country-Wide Programs:** Can small, leveraged investments at the country level increase impact and sustainability?
5. **Research and Data:** Can better information on the transmission of water-related diseases and the relative effectiveness of different interventions lead to better investment decisions?

*These focal areas are subject to change as we continue to learn about the WS&H sector.*

## Learning Grants

We have made eight grants so far to advance our understanding of WS&H. **These eight grants are summarized on the following page** under the most relevant of the five learning areas (noting, however, that many grants work across more than one area). We expect to make several more grants to expand and deepen our understanding of opportunities in the sector.

*Please note that we are not accepting unsolicited proposals for new WS&H grants.*

Updated information on our WS&H activities is available at <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/wsh>

Topic	Grantee*	Purpose	Location(s)
<b>Stimulating Demand</b>			
Schools-based Water, Sanitation & Hygiene Interventions	CARE	To identify, develop, and test innovative approaches to schools-based WS&H interventions. The grant will: (1) determine whether schools-based programs are an effective, scalable, and sustainable way to provide safe WS&H; and (2) if so, develop a plan to help the government drive scale-up of schools-based WS&H at the national level.	Kenya
Total Sanitation & Sanitation Market Development	Water & Sanitation Program, World Bank	To test at scale the Community Led Total Sanitation model, a collective effort to eliminate completely the practice of open defecation. The project will work in rural villages, small towns, and informal urban settlements in 4 regions, aiming to reach an average of 1 million people in each region. In addition to stimulating demand for WS&H services, the project helps the local private sector supply affordable sanitation products.	1. Himachal Pradesh State, India 2. Madhya Pradesh State, India 3. East Java, Indonesia 4. Tanzania
Scaling Up Handwashing Behavior Change	Water & Sanitation Program, World Bank	To test whether innovative promotional approaches can generate widespread and sustained increases in handwashing with soap among the poor, especially those who care for small children. The project will use mass media campaigns and other channels to reach target audiences in 4 countries, aiming to reach an average of more than 1 million people in each country.	1. Peru 2. Senegal 3. Tanzania 4. Vietnam
<b>Improving Technologies and Products</b>			
2006 Development Marketplace Competition	Water & Sanitation Program, World Bank	To seek out innovative WS&H technologies and approaches at the grassroots level, especially from stakeholders outside the usual development community.	Multiple locations
Household Water Treatment (via a commercial approach)	PATH	To develop and deploy a range of household water treatment products, and marketing and distribution strategies, that enable commercial enterprises to produce and distribute high-quality and affordable products to the poor.	TBD (India likely + limited work in 1 or 2 other countries)
<b>Delivering Market-based Services</b>			
Fee-based WS&H Services	Acumen Fund	To test the effectiveness of providing safe, affordable water and sanitation services to the poor for a fee. Focuses on developing local financing and support services for emerging WS&H ventures.	India, East Africa
<b>Research and Data Gathering</b>			
Study on Environmental Influences on Diarrheal Diseases	University of Maryland School of Medicine, Center for Vaccine Development	To identify which pathways on the fecal-oral route are more strongly correlated with specific pathogens causing diarrheal diseases.	Multiple locations
Study on Comparative WS&H Interventions	University of California, Berkeley	To generate and disseminate evidence from randomized evaluations about which rural water interventions are more effective [e.g., comparing protecting water at its source to treating it in the household].	Kenya

\* Lead Grantee. Grantees may work with partners, sub-grantees and consultants