

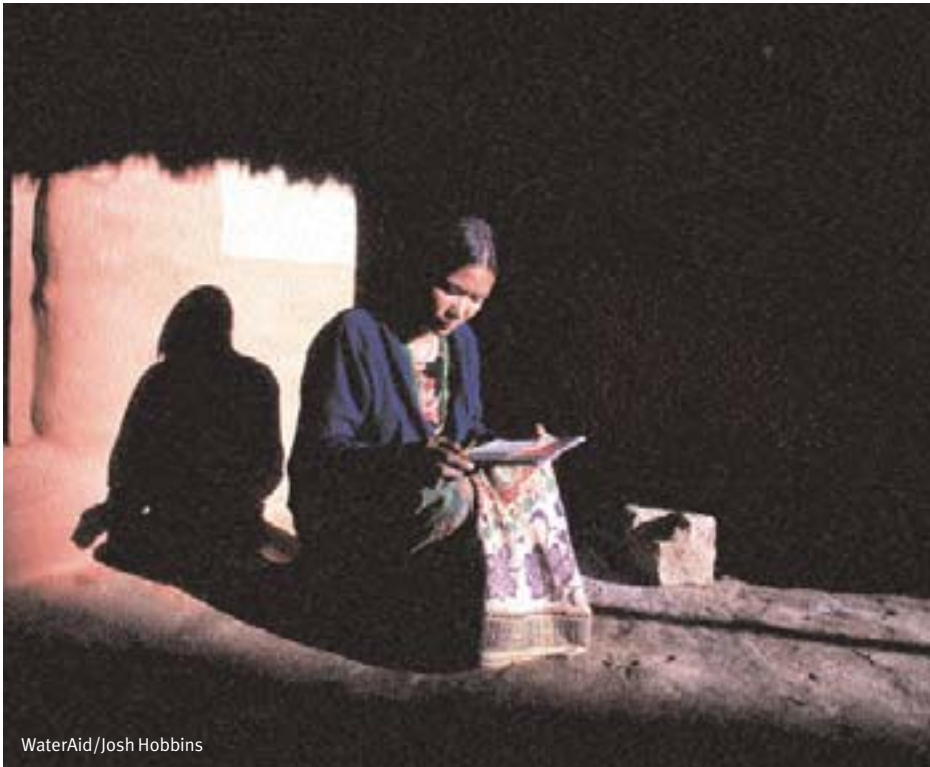
Nepal



WaterAid/Jim Holmes

Nepal lies landlocked between India and China, its dramatic landscape rising from the lowland plains of the Terai up to the peak of Everest in the Himalayas. After a decade-long violent conflict between Maoist, Monarchist forces and political parties that has claimed more than 13,000 lives and damaged the social and physical infrastructure of the country, Parliament has now been restored. However, the troubles continue and have added new challenges to development, especially in rural areas where most WaterAid-supported projects and partners operate. People are increasingly migrating to urban centres to escape the poverty or violence of life in the country. Although it is estimated that 84% of people have access to water, in hill areas distances to water sources are great. The Terai wells are often highly polluted and the quality of water is affected by the presence of arsenic in many areas. More than 73% of the population do not have access to sanitation, spreading disease through unhygienic living environments.

WaterAid in Nepal



WaterAid/Josh Hobbins

WaterAid began its water, sanitation and hygiene work in Nepal in 1986 and has continued despite the political instability and conflict of recent years. Our activities with six partner organisations are vital as without safe water to drink and somewhere hygienic to go to the toilet childhood ailments like diarrhoea are killers (worldwide a child dies every 15 seconds from water-related diseases). Every year approximately a third of all deaths in Nepal are children under five, half of which are due to diarrhoea.

WaterAid's aim is to improve the lives of poor people through its work with non governmental organisations (NGOs) partners, which in Nepal are: Nepal Water for Health (NEWAH), Lumanti, Environment and Public Health Organisation, Urban Environment Management Society, Centre for Integrated Urban Development, and NGO Forum. WaterAid also supports the Federation of Water and Sanitation Users Group (FEDWASUN) – a network with more than 700 water and sanitation users groups representing 50,000 households – to make the voices of poor people heard by the local governments and service providers at the national level.

In rural areas WaterAid and NEWAH have provided water, sanitation and hygiene education to more than 3% of the population, while our urban work reaches

those living in slum and squatter settlements in the Kathmandu valley and towns in the narrow strip of flat, fertile land along the Indian border called the Terai.

Nepal rises out of the Terai up into the incredibly steep foothills and mountains of the Himalayas. This extreme topography determines the areas which can be accessed and the methods used to ensure safe drinking water and improved sanitation. Technologies are chosen that are appropriate to local conditions, affordable and easy to set up and maintain by the communities themselves.

Ensuring the quality of water sources is a major challenge. In the Terai arsenic has been found in 17% of wells. WaterAid and its partners use arsenic detection and mitigation methods to keep wells safe. Falling water tables and ground water

pollution pose additional challenges to providing water and sanitation services to poor people in Nepal.

In the hills projects use gravity flow piped supplies where water can be transported by pipework from natural springs to tapstands placed near to homes, thus reducing the drudgery involved in carrying water a long way. In Kathmandu traditional wells are rehabilitated and shallow tubewells installed.

Education on hygiene practices is also carried out in communities, maximising the health benefits of improved water and sanitation services. Water-related diseases are common in Nepal but for the majority of the population the causes of ill-health are shrouded in superstition. Hygiene education is always included in WaterAid projects so that communities learn the importance of handling water safely and associated hygiene practices. Hygiene education tiles on the walls of some villages' public latrines, depict images to promote the importance of washing hands after visiting the latrine or of washing vegetables before cooking. Other promotion methods include role play, puppet shows, songs, home visits and practical lessons.

As well as helping communities to manage water and sanitation improvements and change their hygiene practices, the sustainability of projects is always key to our work in Nepal. For example, NEWAH has piloted the establishment of a SaniMart to increase the accessibility of latrine parts in the Udayapur district in the Eastern region. SaniMarts are easily accessible shops, staffed by trained sanitation promoters, where latrine construction materials, which are usually hard to come by, are sold at affordable rates.

Plans: 2005-2010

A strategy running from 2005 to 2010 sets out the plans and activities for WaterAid in Nepal. During this time WaterAid will continue to focus on water, sanitation and hygiene education working with local partners on community managed projects. Our work in Nepal will continue to be pro-poor, sustainable and environmentally sound.

The key aims are to:

- Directly help 31,000 more people gain access to water and 44,000 more people gain access to sanitation and hygiene education every year by 2010
- Support and strengthen local partner organisations and other non governmental organisations to ensure at least a further 32,000 people gain access to safe domestic water and 33,000 to sanitation every year by 2010

During the period of the strategy WaterAid will have an increased focus on sanitation. It is estimated that only 27% of the population has access to a latrine. This means that in many cases the potential life changing benefits of a clean water supply are being undermined by ill-health caused by an unhygienic environment. Therefore further efforts are needed to build latrines and to provide education on good hygiene practices. Stopping defecating in the open where waste can wash into streams and rivers will help to keep water sources uncontaminated, reducing the spread of disease.

WaterAid will also allocate 30% of its programme expenditure in Nepal for expanding its urban projects to help meet the rapidly increasing need for safe water and sanitation. Migration to towns and cities from the countryside has accelerated due to the ongoing conflict. This means that many poor people arriving in urban areas often end up in slums or squatter settlements that already have no effective water supply or sanitation services.

The conflict has impeded human development and WaterAid is working to enhance its partners' capacity to work under these conditions. Our partners will continue their projects using pro-poor policies to better identify, target and positively impact on poor and deprived communities.

In Nepal, official estimates state that 42% of the population live below the poverty line. Links between the poor and the Government and service providers are weak and can result in unaccountable agencies failing in their duties to deliver services to which people are entitled under national poverty reduction strategies. To create accountability WaterAid and its partners are working at the local level through Citizens' Action projects. Through these, communities develop a fuller understanding of their entitlements to services, gather information on their current situation, and learn about the range of responsibilities for policy and service delivery. People are then supported to hold service providers to account through a process of dialogue, negotiation and action. The ultimate aim of these projects is to ensure that governments and service providers stick by their commitments and that citizens gain access to sustainable and affordable water and sanitation services.

At the national level, WaterAid and its partners will continue to lobby for more and better financing, with special emphasis on sanitation. We will also call on the water sector to plan their activities in a way that is clear, open to challenge, and responds to the demands of poor people.

Tubewells in the Terai.



WaterAid/Josh Hobbins

Malahanma is in the Southern Terai Region of Eastern Nepal where NEWAH has worked with the community to install 58 shallow tubewells serving 550 households (2772 people) as part of an integrated water supply, sanitation and health education project.

Nirmala Chaudhary used to get water from a bamboo flow pump, but the water was dirty and the bamboo rotted away. She says, "The water (from the bamboo pipe) used to smell bad. We used to use it to drink, bathe, wash and for our garden. Now water quality is good from this pump. It has improved health and more children are clean. Before the pump there used to be a lot of diarrhoea, but now it is reduced."

The regions where WaterAid has projects are marked.



Nepal

Area: 147,200km²

Capital: Kathmandu

Other main cities: Biratnagar, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur, Birganj

Population **25.2 m**

Infant mortality **82/1000**

Life expectancy **61.6 yrs**

Water supply coverage **84%**

Sanitation coverage **27%**

Below poverty line **42%**

Human development index **136**

Adult literacy **49%**

Sources: World Development Report 2005, Human Development Report 2005, UN 2005.

Official statistics tend to understate the extent of water and sanitation problems, sometimes by a large factor. There are not sufficient resources available for accurate monitoring of either population or coverage. Varying definitions of water and sanitation coverage are used and national figures mask large regional differences in coverage.

Achievements to date

- Implemented 700 rural water, sanitation and hygiene projects serving more than 800,000 rural people and 100 urban projects reaching more than 70,000 people
- Provided water, sanitation and hygiene education to 3% of the total rural population
- Helped establish civil society organisations such as NGO Forum on Urban Water and Sanitation and Federation of Rural Water and Sanitation User Group to improve governance in the water sector

£2 pays for a latrine cover slab

£15 pays to train two community water technicians to maintain a gravity flow water supply scheme and hand-dug well

£90 pays for a handpump for 10 households

£480 pays for a health motivator to promote good hygiene practices to 850 people for 12 months

£15,300 pays for a gravity flow water supply reaching 85 households

WaterAid

WaterAid – water for life

The UK's only major charity dedicated exclusively to the provision of safe domestic water, sanitation and hygiene education to the world's poorest people.

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WaterAid/Jim Holmes

Shaili Tithung stands at the tapstand in Kamrang village from where she has collected water since 1992.



WaterAid/Josh Hobbins

It used to take Shaili more than three hours walking down steep, narrow paths to collect 20 litres of water. In 1992 WaterAid supported NEWAH and a local NGO called the Mahankal Youth Club, to install a new water scheme in the village. Sanitation and hygiene education were included in the project and now all of the houses in the village have their own latrines.

Shaili says, "It takes about two minutes to collect water. I use the time I save for farm activities and to look after my husband and children. Agriculture is our main occupation. The health education received from the project is applicable throughout my whole life.

Due to the scarcity of water families used to be reluctant for their daughters to marry someone from our village. Now we do not want our daughters to get married in a village where women have to spend hours and hours collecting water.

Today the children in my village have a better life compared to the past. Now they can give time to their studies rather than helping their parents collect water. Now we all have much more control over our time."

Deepak Rai is the head of a water user committee in the Dhumbarahi section of Kathmandu.



WaterAid/Josh Hobbins

Deepak Rai, 46, is the head of the water user committee that helps to maintain the water supply that WaterAid's partner LUMANTI installed. Poor people migrating to this rapidly expanding city often end up in unplanned settlements like this one. Deepak explains how water and sanitation improvements can change lives.

"We used to get our water from a pond that was half an hour away. Now we save at least two hours a day that we used to spend fetching water. Mostly women used to fetch the water but now they can spend time with their families."

Six families contributed 1800 Rupees (about £17) each while WaterAid's partner LUMANTI provided the rest of the funds and the training necessary to build two latrines in the area. "It is very convenient. I asked my neighbours to give money to build latrines because they are very important for keeping our community clean and healthy."