



BY THE NUMBERS

PARTICIPANTS: 352,823

Girls: 171,150

Boys: 181,673

**CHILDREN WITH
DISABILITIES COMPLETING
WASH UP! PROGRAM:** 3,241

SCHOOL WASH CLUBS: 3,733

TEACHERS TRAINED: 9,490

**MASTER TEACHERS
TRAINED:** 1,287

(All statistics are as of March 2023.
Master Teachers can train other
teachers.)

WASH UP! COUNTRIES

Afghanistan	Lebanon
El Salvador	Malawi
Ghana	Mali
Guatemala	Mozambique
Honduras	Niger
India	Rwanda
Iraq	Syria
Jordan	Zambia
Kenya	Zimbabwe

DONOR: Private donors

PROJECT TIME FRAME: 2015 to present (ongoing)

PARTNERS: Sesame Workshop, Stanford University (research partner),
Oxford Policy Management (research partner in India)

Overview

WASH UP! is a unique program that harnesses the potential of children as agents of change—leading to a healthier, brighter future. It is a child-focused, play-based hygiene behavior-change program that uses engaging videos, games, and stories to help children learn, practice, and share healthy hygiene behaviors.

World Vision began implementing WASH UP! in 2015 through a partnership with Sesame Workshop (the nonprofit organization behind Sesame Street). Starting in Zambia, the program has expanded to 18 countries as of 2022.

The partnership leverages:

- Sesame’s beloved brand, characters, and ability to create impactful content addressing stigmatized issues—all through the lens of a child
- World Vision’s deep local networks and long-term commitment to local communities, including school-based programming and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure projects

The WASH UP! program aims to provide access to meaningful sanitation and hygiene education and encourage healthy behaviors in children ages 5 to 9. Sesame characters Raya (pictured above and at right) and Elmo have the unique ability to talk to children, model behaviors for them, and give them the language to talk about taboo topics such as toilet use. Raya is pioneering conversations all over the world about clean water, handwashing with soap, and proper latrine use through easy-to-share reminders that children can teach to family, siblings, and friends.

By empowering children as change agents, the WASH UP! program aspires to build and reinforce healthy hygiene behaviors of entire communities through what children are being taught in the WASH UP! curriculum.

WASH UP! is implemented primarily in school-based settings, although in fragile and refugee contexts, WASH UP! is implemented through community groups and child-friendly spaces. Children participate in 8 to 12 sessions with Sesame Workshop’s learning materials and messages contextualized for the participating schools and communities.



Program focus

While Sesame Workshop is the lead on the educational framework and content development, World Vision ensures schools are equipped with sufficient WASH facilities so that children can practice the behaviors promoted.

Key programmatic water conservation and behavior-change messages promoted through WASH UP! are:

- Wash hands with soap.
- Use clean, safe toilets.
- Wear sandals to the toilet.
- Drink safe water from a clean container.
- Share what you learn with other children and families.
- Girls and boys are both responsible for water-related chores.



Objectives

Since WASH UP! uses a contextualized approach, some countries also will develop secondary messages particularly relevant for children in their context, such as:

- Coping with “big feelings” (Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria)
- Food hygiene (Ghana)
- Gender equity around WASH responsibilities (India and Kenya)

Several WASH UP! expansion opportunities have allowed for additional program adaptations, further supporting children’s participation and learning around health and hygiene, including:

- Disability inclusion (Mali and Niger)
- Neglected tropical diseases (West Africa)
- Menstrual hygiene management (Zimbabwe)
- Adaptations for preschool learners (Rwanda)

The basic steps to begin WASH UP! include:

1. An initial in-country startup workshop, including Sesame Workshop, World Vision, government representatives, and other stakeholders. During this workshop, participants work together to create an educational framework for WASH UP!.
2. Sesame Workshop uses the educational framework to contextualize the WASH UP! educational materials. They work closely with World Vision’s country office WASH team and other key stakeholders to ensure hygiene messages are properly explained; translations are accurate; photos, artwork, and videos are culturally aligned; and printing is high quality and complete.

3. The WASH UP! program is piloted at 25 sites. Sesame Workshop leads initial training for the WASH UP! facilitators (often schoolteachers). During the pilot, Sesame coordinates formative research to determine how children are receiving the materials and messages. World Vision is the main point of contact for the facilitators and monitors the program.
4. A follow-up workshop is held to reflect on the successes and challenges of the pilot. Based on this feedback, Sesame Workshop completes necessary revisions to the materials and messages, and then the materials are printed for scale-up.
5. World Vision uses the revised materials to scale the program to a minimum of 100 locations. Facilitators are trained, and World Vision supports facilitators, monitors the program, and works to further expand it.

Research and learning

Zambia

In 2016, World Vision partnered with Stanford University to pilot an impact evaluation of WASH UP! in Zambia, which was selected because it was the first country to implement WASH UP! at World Vision. Twelve primary schools in the Sinazongwe district were selected for the study. Primary study questions were:

1. How does exposure to the WASH UP! program affect student and teacher knowledge and perceptions regarding WASH behaviors and health, as well as their WASH-related behaviors? How long do these effects last?

2. To what extent are key messages from the WASH UP! program transmitted by students to their caregivers at home?

The baseline was conducted at the start of the school term in May/June 2017; the midline in September/October 2017, shortly after the WASH UP! program had been implemented; and the endline in June/July 2018. Data were collected through in-person interviews with 558 students and their parents, as well as from the entire set of 24 Grade 1 and Grade 4 teachers at the 12 study schools. Other data-collection activities included water and sanitation infrastructure assessments, structured observation of student handwashing practices in each school, testing of drinking water sources for fecal contamination, and hand-rinse sampling of a subset of students and parents.

The study found that students and teachers had overwhelmingly positive feedback about the curriculum, with more than 90% of students who participated in WASH UP! indicating the sessions were “fun” and “interesting.” In addition, first graders demonstrated a 54% increase in knowledge of germs, and a 39% increase in identifying unsafe sources of drinking water. Evidence also suggested that students understood and internalized many of the key messages taught through WASH UP!

For example, after attending WASH UP! students were more likely to share WASH information learned at school with parents at home, extending the reach of school-based interventions. Take-home materials resulted in more parents talking with their children about what they learned in school and identifying scientifically supported reasons for washing hands (such as to kill germs).

Overall, the study generated valuable results relevant to the ongoing improvement and implementation of WASH UP! as well as to the design of additional research to quantify the impacts of the program with a high degree of confidence. The results also have implications for the wider community of researchers and implementers interested in using school-based programming to catalyze broader household- and community-scale change. Learnings from this pilot impact evaluation are now being applied to a more in-depth study in India.

India

World Vision is currently partnering with Stanford University and Oxford Policy Management on a WASH UP! study in India. This four-arm trial looks not only at the impacts of the WASH UP!

curriculum on student knowledge and behavior, it also explores in-depth the added impact of operations and maintenance of school WASH infrastructure on hygiene behavior change, especially handwashing, as well as student absenteeism rates. The study focuses on students in first and fourth grades.

For this study, World Vision worked with Sesame Workshop to create additional take-home materials that will be used to assess the level to which WASH UP! messages are being shared at home with parents, siblings, and other family members. Mid-term results will be available in October 2023, and final results in early 2024.

Expansion plans

The WASH UP! program continues to grow and expand, including a follow-up curriculum called WASH UP! Girl Talk, which focuses on puberty and menstrual health in children ages 9 to 14. Thanks to funding from the Clean Water Here foundation, WASH UP! expanded to two new countries in 2023—El Salvador and Guatemala, and, by 2024, WASH UP! Girl Talk will expand to El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Kenya.



"I have been facilitating WASH UP! sessions in my school for the past three academic terms. In my seven-year experience as a classroom teacher, I am yet to see a model that children are so excited to participate in and tell other children what they are learning weekly in the WASH club. In fact, they remind me when it is time for practice, and I can see that our school environment is so clean, especially our latrines. I think the government should take it up and let every child benefit from the model."

—Olivia Boanya,
school health teacher in Ghana