

# USAID HEALTH AND HYGIENE ACTIVITY “SWACHCHHATA”



## OVERVIEW

USAID’s Health and Hygiene Activity (2016-2024), also known as “Swachchhata,” crisscrossed the land to support 248 healthcare facilities improve the health status of communities living in remote mountainous and hilly regions of midwestern Nepal. The program focused on various interventions to improve quality of health service delivery and hygiene among health workers and patients, including to 181 healthcare facilities with water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) infrastructural support. More than 487,800 community members are benefitting from the program’s interventions.

## INTERVENTIONS

### Infection Prevention and Control

Trained and provided follow up support to government health supervisors and healthcare facility staff to adopt infection prevention and control practices, which are essential to prevent healthcare-associated infections among health workers and the patients they serve. Such infection prevention and control practices include: sterilization of medical instruments, handwashing with soap and water, cleaning procedure rooms and toilets, and proper healthcare waste management. These interventions improved quality of care and infection prevention and control for a range of infectious diseases, including COVID-19.

### Reliable Safe Drinking Water Supply in Healthcare Facilities

Installed functional 24-hour piped safe drinking water supply systems to ensure continuous water supply at critical points of care within healthcare facilities. Healthcare facility staff no longer have to travel off site to fetch water multiple times a day to try to meet healthcare facility water needs.

### Gender and Disability-Friendly Toilet Facilities

Installed toilets with disability-friendly fixtures, wheelchair access ramp, secure lockable doors, and handwashing stations either inside or nearby the health facilities. These features are critical to provide care for persons with physical disabilities, the elderly, and pregnant mothers needing support.

### Solar Power Systems

In collaboration with the Alternative Energy Promotion Centre, United Nations Development Program Renewable Energy for Rural Livelihood, and local

governments, supported selected healthcare facilities to improve electricity supply through installation of solar photovoltaic systems. Medical providers can now deliver babies at night using solar powered lights to provide safer deliveries. They can also operate medical and infection prevention equipment and make ice packs from the refrigerator for use during vaccination programs to store and handle vaccines properly.

### Healthcare Waste Management Systems

Installed on-site burial pits, placenta pits and composting bins so healthcare facilities are able to treat and safely dispose of hazardous medical waste. Facility staff were also trained on how to properly segregate waste materials into different bins based on waste streams. Proper disposal of medical waste prevents potential harm to health workers, clients and communities surrounding healthcare facilities.



## INTERVENTIONS (CONTINUED)

### Governance and Accountability

Engaged key stakeholders in participatory three-stage dialogues prior to construction of all infrastructures. Through consensus building, municipalities and health facility operation and management committees committed to providing both financial and technical support towards the construction and operation and maintenance of infrastructures, demonstrating ownership and accountability to improve quality health service delivery for all.

### Operation and Maintenance of WASH Facilities

Trained key stakeholders on how to keep WASH and solar infrastructures running effectively and efficiently. Healthcare workers are able to adopt correct and consistent infection prevention and control practices when WASH and solar facilities are operating smoothly.

### Behavior Change Communication

Developed the first Provider Behavior Change Communication handbook for Nepal to promote improved interaction between healthcare providers and clients, and client counseling on key WASH behavior change messages. Healthcare facilities are reporting fewer cases of diarrhea in the past few years.

### Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

Involved men, women and socially marginalized groups in playing an important role in the design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of interventions. Female village maintenance workers report feeling motivated to utilize the skills they learned after receiving trainings.



### TARGETED WASH MESSAGES



Safe and hygienic use of toilet



Handwashing with soap and water at critical times



Safe disposal of child feces



Safe handling and treatment of drinking water



Personal/menstrual hygiene management

## PROJECT RESULTS

**2,960**

health workers and health facility operation and management committee members trained in basic infection prevention and control and provider behavior change communication.

**181**

health facility operation and management committees trained to oversee WASH/solar system maintenance and infection prevention and control protocols.

**51**

local governance bodies providing oversight and resources to support WASH and infection prevention and control in healthcare facilities.

**181**

healthcare facilities with functional drinking water supply, sanitation, and hygiene systems.



**61**

solar systems installed at healthcare facilities providing reliable electricity 24 hours a day.

An increase from **28%** to **87%** (2017 to 2024) in health workers performing hand hygiene before attending patients.

**1,800**

female community health volunteers trained to convey WASH messages to communities, especially women and disadvantaged groups.

An increase from **0%** to **74%** (2016 to 2024) in high performance on infection prevention service readiness among healthcare facilities.

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