



For a world without hunger

# Your topic: Water

2019 REPORT





## Dear friends of Welthungerhilfe,

Access to clean drinking water is a human right. It is also a prerequisite for a world without hunger and poverty, because people without sufficient access to water, sanitation facilities, and hygiene (WASH) – currently some 884 million worldwide – fall ill more often, suffer from malnutrition, and grow too weak to work. They face financial ruin and hunger and misery. To break this vicious cycle and achieve sustainable rural development, Welthungerhilfe is prioritising WASH in its projects.

We are currently reaching around a million people through 61 such projects, primarily in Africa and Asia. Combining a variety of measures has proven especially effective, because hunger cannot be banished simply by building a well or water treatment facility. People need toilets and handwashing stations, environmentally friendly sewage management, functional waste management, and knowledge about hygiene, healthy nutrition, and sustainable agriculture.

More and more attention is being paid to the key issue of menstrual hygiene. Millions of women and young girls face a lifetime of disadvantages because of their periods. Now, their chances at a good life are increasing – read how on page four. Turn to page six to learn how families in the Indian federal state of Madhya Pradesh are processing drinking water with a simple but effective three-pot filter.

Thanks to your support, we can implement innovative projects like these and enable people to enjoy their right to a healthy life.

Kind regards,

Stephan Simon  
Welthungerhilfe WASH Expert

### Publication Details

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**Cover photo:** Mouro Brenda, from Karamoja, Uganda, joyfully displays a menstrual cup.



### Bomi/Montserrado, Liberia

Healthcare centres, a safe water supply, and adequate toilets, combined with hygiene education and healthy nutrition, stabilise the healthcare system and strengthen the population in the wake of the Ebola epidemic of 2014–16.



### Global: Menstrual Hygiene

Welthungerhilfe is putting more emphasis on menstrual hygiene in its projects to enable girls and women to live with dignity and autonomy.



Clean water, sanitation facilities, and good hygiene are essential for survival. In numerous projects throughout the world, we ensure access for people in even remote regions.

### Gabiley District, Somaliland

An underground water reservoir yields enough water to supply people and livestock for up to six months, even during droughts.



### Chitwan, Nepal

New toilets provide privacy and ensure that sewage and drinking water remain separate. People now get sick less often, and better hygiene is having an especially great impact on girls at schools.



### Mwaliija, Malawi

Thanks to a new solar-powered irrigation system with dams and reservoirs, the inhabitants of this drought-ridden region will soon be able to work their fields year-round and bring in multiple harvests.



### Regions of Sheopur and Chhattarpur, India

The matka filter, consisting of a stack of three earthen pots, represents a simple and cost-effective method of removing noxious substances from drinking water in rural regions.



### Tuléar, Madagascar

A system for recycling, sewage treatment, and waste disposal helps protect the groundwater. It also creates new jobs and improves the people's quality of life. A new recycling museum has been built, too.



# Menstrual Hygiene: Taboos Inhibit Development



One taboo less in Karamoja: The singer Lady Comfort sings about menstrual cups, letting everyone know how they work.

**For many women and girls in developing countries, their periods are considered shameful and put them at a disadvantage. Especially in rural areas, the menstrual cycle is still completely taboo, and poor hygiene conditions compound the problem. This presents a life-long obstacle for women and exposes them and their families to a greater risk of hunger and malnutrition. Welthungerhilfe is putting more emphasis on menstrual hygiene in its projects to enable girls and women to live with dignity and autonomy.**

This has led to events that would have been inconceivable in the past, for example on 28 May in Turit, a provincial capital in South Sudan, when Johnbosco Kinama got up in front of 1,800 students from seven schools and announced, “We need to make sure that no girl misses class because of her period!” The Welthungerhilfe employee wore the same pink t-shirt as everyone else at the meeting. “Menstruation Is Normal”, declared the large letters on his chest. Teachers and representatives of the government, the local administration, and partner organisations had also donned the

brightly-coloured shirt. They wanted to send a clear signal: “It’s time for action.” This was the motto of the first international Menstrual Hygiene Day in South Sudan.

## Lifelong Disadvantages for Women and Girls

Even in the 21st century, the topic of menstruation meets with stubborn silence in much of the world. Millions of girls and women have no idea what happens to them month after month. When they bleed, many think they have an incurable disease like cancer or AIDS. Even adults who are mothers themselves often do not understand the biological processes taking place in their bodies. In some countries, women are completely banned from their villages during their periods. They are deemed unclean or bewitched and are forbidden from milking, cooking, or working the fields, preventing them from fulfilling their role as primary breadwinner for the family for at least five days a month. Millions of young girls miss classes, because they cannot afford tampons, sanitary pads, or menstrual cups. Out of desperation, they resort to using rags, sand, or cotton wool and do not dare to go to



school for fear that the protection will fail. As a result, their grades suffer, and many end up dropping out, with their future opportunities permanently limited.

To address this issue, Welthungerhilfe is adjusting its projects to include simple methods for menstrual hygiene and education. These programmes have already reached more than 15,000 women and girls in Africa and South-East Asia. For example, women in the Congo produce washable sanitary pads locally, earning extra income. In Kenya, mothers openly discuss traditional taboos, and in Karamoja, Uganda, Welthungerhilfe has distributed 2,000 menstrual cups to students as part of Project Eva. The cup-shaped containers are made of medical-grade silicon and serve to collect menstrual blood. They are washable, easy to use, and very durable, with an expected lifespan of ten years. At the same time, the students and women learn key facts about sexuality and hygiene. The feedback has been overwhelming, with all users enthusing about their new-found independence. An interactive radio programme has also been received with great interest, and not only among the female population.

At schools such as the one in South Sudan's Torit, periods now represent a core component of all WASH activities implemented by Welthungerhilfe and its partners. In Malawi alone, around 3,000 girls regularly discuss their menstrual cycles in health clubs. In these safe spaces, nobody needs to be ashamed to ask questions like "Will I lose my virginity by using a menstrual cup?" or "Can I urinate while wearing a menstrual cup?" In Burundi, more than 1,000 schoolgirls use the locally made sanitary pads. A set of five washable pads costs EUR 5 and lasts two years. When the use of menstrual cups or washable sanitary pads becomes commonplace and accessible for women and girls, this will have far-reaching effects. Women who graduate from school have been proven to raise healthier families, for example in a study by the Centre for Global Development, which reported that their children are predominantly better nourished. Good management of menstrual hygiene also improves girls' health and education, ultimately promoting the social and economic development of their society as a whole.



Students in South Sudan chose to send a message through their t-shirts, with large letters declaring, "Menstruation Is Normal".



In the Nepalese district of Chitwan, students learn about menstrual hygiene and sew reusable pads. And in Malawi, women have an opportunity to earn an extra income.





# India: A Local Solution for Clean Water



Matka filters are easy to use and gently purify polluted water.

**Clean drinking water is a rare resource in India. The subcontinent needs to provide for 16 percent of the world's population with only four percent of the global freshwater supply. Extended droughts are exacerbating the shortage. The water flowing from public supply pipes and wells is often severely polluted. This circumstance is having catastrophic consequences for the population's health and nutrition status. In the federal state of Madhya Pradesh, Welthungerhilfe is supporting a process that enables people to process their drinking water simply and cleanly at home.**

An alarming number of children, young women, and breastfeeding mothers in the rural regions of Sheopur and Chhatarpur are severely or chronically malnourished. One out of four children weighs less than 2,500 grams at birth. "This leaves the children more vulnerable

to disease and permanently cripples their mental and physical development. They will never be able to fully develop", explains Head of Project Pratibha Srivastava. To break this cycle, Welthungerhilfe has been applying an integrated approach in 100 villages. This includes project measures in the areas of health, hygiene, nutrition, and food processing. An equally important factor is access to clean drinking water. "This posed a great challenge due to the extremely high iron content of the water that the villagers draw from the wells. The iron can settle in the liver, causing nausea, diarrhoea, and vomiting. These are not good conditions for effectively fighting undernutrition", says Pratibha Srivastava.

A sophisticated system provides safe water.

### Safe and Simple to Use

Searching for a way of improving water quality, Welthungerhilfe's local partner organisation was able to provide a cost-effective and innovative solution: the matka filter, also known as the three-pot filter. A matka is an earthen container with a lid at the top and a water spout at the bottom, traditionally used for water storage in many Indian homes. The small pores of the fired clay allow minuscule amounts of liquid through to the outside, where they evaporate. This process lowers the temperature inside the container, keeping the water inside cool. Combined with two additional clay pots, this water storage equipment can double as a filter: The pots are stacked on top of one another, and the iron-rich water is poured into the one on top. Through a hole in the bottom, it enters the middle pot, which is filled with sand on the bottom, brick gravel in the middle, and charcoal on top. To keep the filter layers separate, each one is individually wrapped in nylon netting. With the iron and noxious substances filtered out, the water then flows into the bottom pot and can be extracted through the tap. A matka filter can hold around 15 litres, and the filter layers need to be replaced every week. "The system has been well received by the families, in part because it is easy to use and made from locally available materials. The water also tastes a lot better now", says Pratibha Srivastava.

### Ensuring Long-Term Health

More than 22,000 households with over 100,000 people are projected to use the matka filters in the long term and prepare their food and drinks with clean and safe drinking water. Representatives from municipal authorities and government entities are assisting in the rapid, broad dissemination of the filter technology. After being introduced to the process, they share their knowledge with the local population – just like the around 500 employees of the Anganwadi centres, which operate under the umbrella of India's health services. With their consulting services, they are the first place mothers turn to for advice on nutrition and hygiene practices as well as for health check-ups and pre-school education.



Pratibha Srivastava underlines, "with the introduction of the matka filter, mothers have become more aware of the importance of clean drinking water and its direct effects on the health of their families. New jobs have also been created, as making the filters now provides numerous potters with a secure and regular income. This represents a big step forward for our efforts to improve people's living conditions in the region for the long term."

The knowledge of the Anganwadi centres' employees is necessary for more families to use the filter technology.

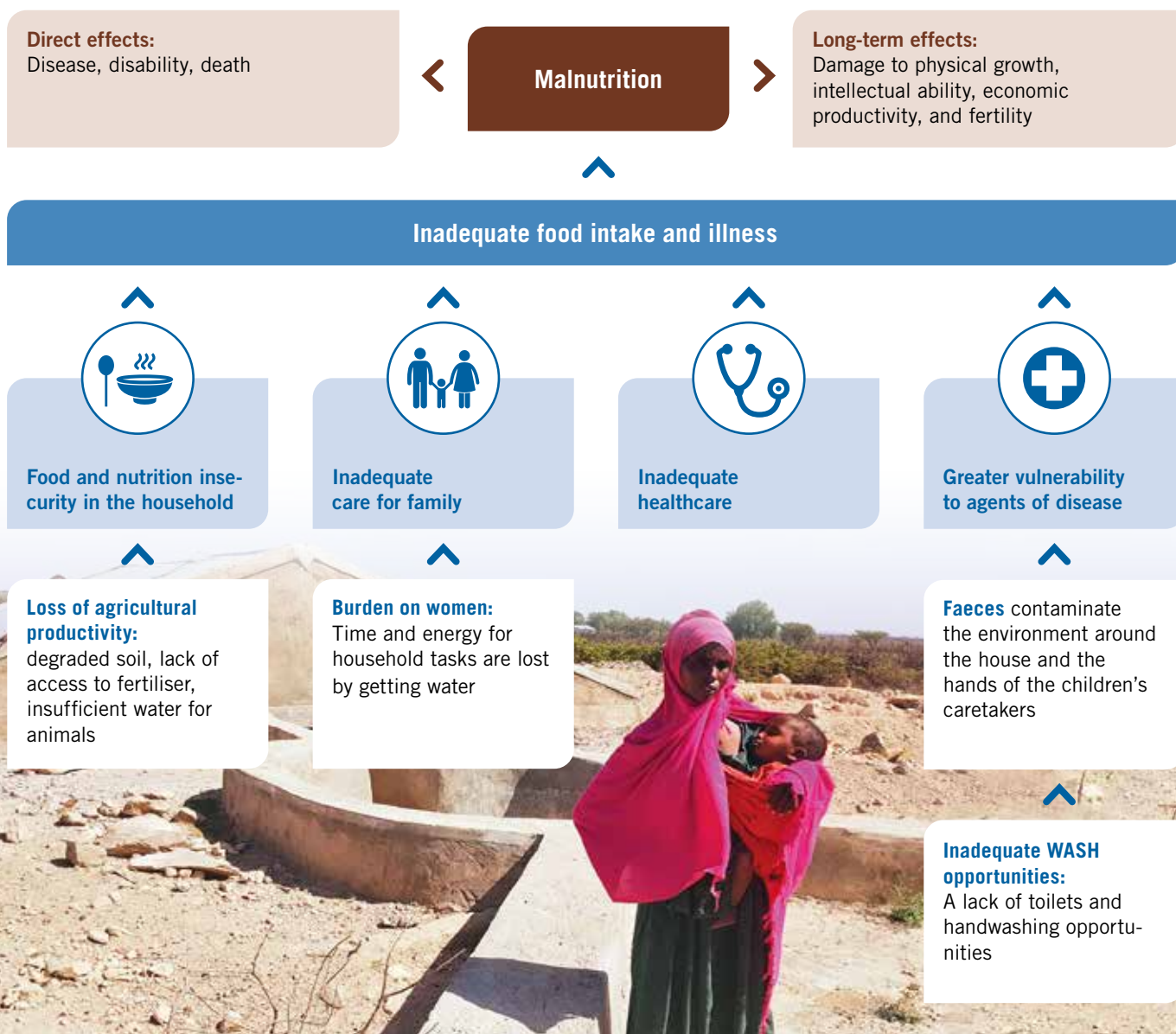
India has  
**16 percent**  
of the world's population  
but only  
**4 percent**  
of its freshwater.





# Malnutrition and WASH: Inextricably Linked

Based on a chart developed by the Department for International Development (DFID)



**Study after study concludes that hygiene is a key factor for the nutrition of children and adults. Around 50 percent of the effects of undernutrition can be traced back to environmental hygiene conditions.**

For example, contaminated drinking water and insufficient sanitation cause severe diarrhoea. This reduces food and nutrient intake, the body grows weaker, and vulnerability to further infections and long-term disturbances of growth and development increases. Someone who is sick cannot work and needs money for medications. This makes it more difficult for families to meet everyone's nutritional needs. In this context, WASH activities become very important.

The easy availability of clean drinking water, sanitation facilities, and hygiene options, especially for handwashing, can prevent disease and its effects. Women save time getting water, freeing them up to take care of their children and feed their family. Water for people, animals, and fields safeguards agricultural revenue. J. Humphrey of the Centre for Human Nutrition says, "there is no doubt that the complex problem of child undernutrition will not be solved by toilets and handwashing alone. However, the prevention of gastrointestinal infections, which affect almost all children in developing countries, will be deciding for normalising their growth."

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