

EVENT SNAPSHOT

Scaling Up WASH Services in a Pandemic Seminar Series: Part 2 – Urban Sanitation

Event Details

Date and Time

11 June, 3:30–4:30 p.m.

Venue

MS Teams

Related water subthemes (based on Water Advisory Teams)

x	Water supply, sanitation, and wastewater		Flood/drought risk management and resilience
	Irrigation and productivity		Water governance and finance
	IWRM, storage, water-food-energy nexus	x	Water and health

At current rates of progress, universal access to safely managed sanitation – the aim of the Sustainable Development Goal 6 – won't be achieved until 2030. WaterAid's urban sanitation work, through policy and programming, aims at accelerating the pace of progress across Asia and the Pacific.

In this second part of the seminar series, Andrés Hueso, Senior Policy Analyst for Sanitation, provided an overview of WaterAid's approach, including:

- (i) WaterAid's framing of citywide inclusive sanitation (CWIS);
- (ii) town-wide modelling: the experience in Sakhipur, Bangladesh;
- (iii) research and influencing to address the working conditions of sanitation workers (global and in India); and
- (iv) a study on the functionality of wastewater treatment plants.

Close to 70 participants attended the session.

Key Takeaways

WaterAid's citywide inclusive sanitation (CWIS) approach involves four principles: (i) access to equitable and inclusive sanitation services for all; (ii) management of sanitation services across the whole value chain, which includes the capture, containment, emptying, transport, treatment and safe reuse or disposal of fecal matter; (iii) thriving the sanitation economy; and (iv) building on working partnerships. Based on context and situation, plans and programs aim to provide universal access to sanitation using different solutions depending on what is appropriate, and specifically to reach the most vulnerable, such as poor people, women and children.

Reaching citywide inclusive sanitation needs leadership and finance. Sakhipur is on track to achieve citywide safely managed sanitation, which is the result of technical excellence (including a co-composting plant), political drive, a clear vision, and external support. Financial sustainability cannot be achieved without government budget.

Urban sanitation programs need to address the working conditions of sanitation workers.

Sanitation workers provide an invaluable contribution to safely managed sanitation, their role is vital to our daily lives and the environment. Yet, they are often treated as second-class citizens and usually work in conditions that expose them to the worst consequences of poor sanitation – debilitating infections, injuries, social stigma and even death – every day. Urban sanitation efforts to date have not done enough to address this situation.

Wastewater treatment investments are not about infrastructure, but about service delivery.

Wastewater treatment receives considerable amounts of official development assistance, but in many contexts, poor functionality and sustainability of wastewater treatment plants are recurring issues, and there is limited evidence on the extent and causes of the problems. There is a need to make service sustainability central to the design and technologies chosen for centralized sanitation systems, prioritizing capacity strengthening, promoting institutional reforms, and adopting a holistic approach to urban sanitation.

“If we are serious about the Sustainable Development Goal and achieving safely managed sanitation, then we must look at the safety of the workforce.”

— Andrés Hueso, WaterAid

About the Speaker

Andrés Hueso

Senior Policy Analyst for Sanitation, WaterAid

andreshueso@wateraid.org

Andrés is the sanitation policy global lead at WaterAid, a role that involves both research and advocacy. He has a cross-disciplinary background, combining an engineering degree and extensive research experience on development issues, including a PhD on Indian sanitation policy and the sustainability of community-led total sanitation (CLTS) experiences in the country.

Related Resources

Blog: [The unsung heroes of the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

Report: [Health, Safety and Dignity of Sanitation Workers: An Initial Assessment](#)