Splash is at the forefront of a growing movement to ensure that children in urban poverty have the resources they need to thrive and realize their full potential.

We design child-focused water, sanitation, hygiene (WASH) and menstrual health solutions for governments in some of the world’s biggest, low-resource cities.

With over a decade of experience implementing WASH projects in nearly 2,000 child-serving institutions (orphanages, schools, shelters, and feeding centers), we are embarking on our biggest project yet: Project WISE (WASH-in-Schools for Everyone).
Over the next five years, we are focused on reaching 100% of government schools in two major growth cities: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and Kolkata, India. This initiative, Project WISE (WASH-in-Schools for Everyone), will bring improved water, sanitation, and hygiene infrastructure; behavior change programs for kids and adults; and strengthened menstrual health services for girls aged 10 and above.

Working in kindergarten, primary, and secondary schools, this project will reach large concentrations of underserved young people, typically living in the poorest urban communities.

Our goal is to demonstrate a scalable, durable, and cost-efficient WASH-in-Schools (WINS) model that can be effectively replicated beyond the initial two target cities and countries. For the first time, all government schools in Addis Ababa and Kolkata will have clean drinking water, handwashing stations, and child-friendly toilets that are cost-effective and sustainable.

The impact will be healthier students and improved school attendance, especially for girls.
EXCLUSION FROM THE MAINSTREAM IS THE NORM FOR THE URBAN POOR

THE GLOBE IS CHANGING

FROM NAIROBI

We already know the challenge of developing cities: Even where there is promise of prosperity or opportunity, it is muted by poverty, hunger, and ill-equipped systems for educating and protecting the children growing up there.

TO MUMBAI

BY 2050

3/4 OF THE WORLD’S POPULATION WILL LIVE IN CITIES.

75%

BY 2030

1/4 OF THE WORLD’S POPULATION WILL LIVE IN URBAN SLUMS.

25%

Clean water and decent sanitation are basic human rights, as recognized in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 6 – clean water and sanitation for all. Unsafe drinking water and a lack of water or soap for handwashing are responsible for 2.2 million deaths each year, 90% of whom are children.

Given rapid population growth and urbanization, many governments already struggle to provide equitable WASH services to urban communities. As a result, children in slum and resource poor neighborhoods significantly lag behind in health and education.

The problem is growing worse by the day as 3 million people move into cities every week around the world.

We now have an opportunity to change the course of the future and make cities more livable for the urban poor.

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India will add 530 million city dwellers to its overall population between 2010 and 2050. This is the equivalent of adding half of Africa to India’s cities over 40 years. By the end of the century, India’s largest three cities alone will carry more than 175 million people - greater than half the current population of the United States.
Splash believes that the density of urban poverty creates new opportunities for solutions. And these solutions can scale.

Splash now serves over 430,000 kids in eight countries. In 2017, we achieved a ten-year milestone of reaching every orphanage in China with water filtration systems, serving 1,100 orphanages across the country, while benefiting 190,000 children and adults. In addition, Splash projects have reached 70% of the schoolchildren in Kathmandu, Nepal. Now, we are on track to ensure WASH coverage at 100% of public schools in Kolkata, India and Addis, Ababa, Ethiopia.

No one is claiming that international charity and development—as they’ve been conducted to date—have been overwhelmingly successful.

But the following ten steps are proving effective with water, and may well hold the keys to the future of international development, as a whole.
WHO and UNICEF recommend an increased focus on WASH interventions in schools as diseases may be transmitted more easily there among large groups of people.

 Scholar are everywhere, even in the poorest urban communities.

 Our decade of experience has shown us that schools serve as a platform for influencing and communicating norms, modeling rights and responsibilities, and providing space for community development, not just for students, but also for adults – government administrators, parents, teachers, and staff – who are invested in their success.

 We believe that school-based WASH programs have the greatest potential to transform the long-term behaviors of children, their families, and the broader community. Moreover, WASH interventions in schools have been associated with reductions in school absenteeism, as well as illness and diarrhea.

 By creating locally-owned change in schools, we can create a shift in society where communities will expect and demand safe water and decent toilets, as a human right.
In Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, only 6% of schools had reliable access to water throughout the school week. In Kolkata, India, 56% of schools had water that tested positive for E. coli.

**OBJECTIVE:** GUARANTEE CONTINUOUS SAFE WATER ACCESS

Everything we do starts with clean water. We use the same technology and supply chains as world-class restaurants and hotels to make quality water possible for kids living in urban poverty. We install commercial-grade water filtration systems that remove 99.9999% of bacterial pathogens. The result is water we would serve our own children, without hesitation.

It’s not enough to make sure the water is safe; it needs to be available whenever kids are present. We make sure schools have sufficient water storage, so that there is always water for drinking, handwashing, flushing, and other school needs.

Splash also provides durable, child-friendly drinking and handwashing stations that incorporate behavioral nudges like bright colors and different basin depths to encourage use and separate handwashing and drinking behaviors.

In Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, only 6% of schools had reliable access to water throughout the school week. In Kolkata, India, 56% of schools had water that tested positive for E. coli.
Whether you are a boy or a girl, you need to be able to access a decent toilet. It’s a matter of basic health and dignity. Splash believes that every school should have child-friendly toilet facilities. Yet, too many kids lack access to decent toilets, and too many girls don’t have access to safe and private stalls when they have their period.

We address this through toilet rehabilitation and new toilet construction. We ensure school toilets are outfitted with robust hardware and other measures to meet global standards for safety, privacy, cleanliness, and accessibility. Facilities include concrete flooring, tile, paint, durable toilet pans, doors that lock, water for flushing and cleaning, proper ventilation and lighting, and accessibility features for children who are mobility impaired.

A survey of 60 developing countries found that less than 1/2 of primary schools have access to safe water and 1/3 have adequate sanitation. United Nations Children’s Fund, Annual Report 2008, UNICEF, New York, 2008.
Safe water and child-friendly toilets alone can’t eliminate water-borne illness. Handwashing with soap is critical. Splash’s program starts with engaging and reliable handwashing stations. These stations integrate powerful motivators and environmental cues like mirrors and bright colors to increase child use and handwashing rates.

Our curriculum is designed to engage both kids and adults. Experiential learning is key. No textbook, alone, can do the job. Kids and teachers giggle, sing, and learn as they gain hands-on-experience in practicing the six steps of effective handwashing and how to promote healthy behaviors in others.

Child clubs then encourage healthy WASH behaviors across the school through positive peer pressure. These clubs, and the activities and curriculum we developed in collaboration with government actors, are refreshed regularly to keep children engaged, amused, and motivated.

Objectives:

1. **Create an enabling environment that promotes healthy handwashing**
   - Safe water and child-friendly toilets alone can’t eliminate water-borne illness. Handwashing with soap is critical.
   - Splash’s program starts with engaging and reliable handwashing stations. These stations integrate powerful motivators and environmental cues like mirrors and bright colors to increase child use and handwashing rates.

2. **Students act as the primary educators and champions**
   - Our curriculum is designed to engage both kids and adults. Experiential learning is key. No textbook, alone, can do the job. Kids and teachers giggle, sing, and learn as they gain hands-on-experience in practicing the six steps of effective handwashing and how to promote healthy behaviors in others.

3. **Layer on environmental nudges to promote soap use**
   - Child clubs then encourage healthy WASH behaviors across the school through positive peer pressure. These clubs, and the activities and curriculum we developed in collaboration with government actors, are refreshed regularly to keep children engaged, amused, and motivated.
Splash’s menstrual health approach includes both hardware and software solutions. First, we ensure access to girl-friendly sanitation facilities. We also work to change behaviors and social norms through puberty and menstrual health education. Splash delivers education to both girls and boys to normalize periods and reduce stigma with additional support and trainings just for girls to provide more specific information on the practicalities of managing menstruation. Through formative research and pilot interventions, we look at key barriers and motivators for girls, access to hygiene products at schools, as well as peers within their social networks that influence how they perceive their menstrual health.

Only 14% of schools in Addis Ababa and 9% of schools in Kolkata have facilities for menstrual hygiene management.

Splash hygiene club member demonstrating products on Menstrual Hygiene Day 2018
Splash implements a multi-faceted behavior change program at each school, targeted to children and adults, based on the Behavior Centered Design framework of the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine. Our behavior change intervention merges knowledge, norms, emotions, and habits to create lasting change.

While creating the infrastructure and enabling environment for kids to access water, toilets, and handwashing is critical, equally important is the work done daily in classrooms and on school grounds with students, teachers, and parents to encourage healthy new behaviors, like regular washing of hands by students, consistent cleaning of toilets and proper care of infrastructure by staff, and long-term funding for routine service and maintenance of all WASH infrastructure by education officials.

During a six-month study that Splash conducted at 24 schools in Nepal, we found that handwashing rates increased from 9.4% to 65%, due to our comprehensive behavior change approach.
Splash conducts routine monitoring twice per year at every school to assess the impact of our intervention against key performance indicators, thereby identifying areas for programmatic improvement.

As part of Project WISE, the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine will also conduct a multi-year evaluation to assess the impact of Splash’s interventions at schools. The study will be a simple randomized control trial with one cohort of 80 schools in each city compared two years later. The impacts the study aims to assess are better health and increased school attendance, especially for girls. Results are expected for publication in 2024.

Splash and our evaluation partners will utilize a sophisticated suite of technology tools to track and evaluate our progress.

Splash’s monitoring approach is broadly aligned with the UNICEF/WHO Joint Monitoring Program’s WASH-in-Schools framework.
Proven success at scale compels attention. While most international development work is conducted at a limited, pilot project level, Splash takes a unique 100% coverage approach to reach every government school citywide. We engage key stakeholders including schools, government, local business, and the NGO community towards true systems change.

100% coverage of the target population does not equal “goal achieved.” It simply signals the time to hand over our model to local actors who can keep the work going—more appropriately and just as effectively.

Project WISE will demonstrate the feasibility of a citywide approach and the clear roadmap for replication.
Our ultimate goal is government adoption of the Project WISE intervention. In Kolkata and Addis Ababa, the municipal agencies are taking action to improve WASH-in-Schools, supported by national mandates and strong political will. However, they lack sufficient funding for the full up-front capital expenditure required to improve WASH infrastructure.

To ensure buy-in, Splash requires that governments fund a significant proportion of total project costs - up front, during, and after. With a proven model of impact and scale, clear evidence of efficient costs, and connection to robust local supply chains, we will ensure that government can adopt the program and fund it for the long-term.

The Addis Ababa Education Bureau has committed $8 million to Project WISE in Ethiopia.
CHARITY CAN BE A CATALYST FOR LOCALLY-DRIVEN SOLUTIONS

Splash believes that charity can catalyze local solutions. With Project WISE, we aim to demonstrate a scalable, durable, and cost-efficient model that can be effectively replicated beyond the initial cities and countries.

Our job is to co-create the road map to success, prove it possible at scale, train local actors to do the work, build relationships with government to increase investment, mobilize communities, and then, quite simply, get out of the way.

The ultimate outcome of success, to us, means that our initial proof of concept, at 100% coverage - laid the foundation for (1) local solutions to thrive, and (2) national government to take it towards national coverage. What has been proven at scale in a large city can now be replicated, at scale, in others.

OBJECTIVE: SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT TO SCALE THE PROGRAM NATIONALLY

IF YOU DID IT RIGHT, YOU’RE NO LONGER NEEDED

LOCAL BUSINESS, NGOS, AND GOVERNMENT NOW “CARRY THE WATER”
India, with 1.3 billion people, is the second largest country in the world by population. Kolkata is the third largest city with over 14 million people living in the Kolkata metropolitan area. Diarrheal disease and respiratory infections account for approximately 26% of deaths among children aged 5-14 in India, indicating a need for improved water, sanitation, and hygiene.

Situated in a landscape of poverty and dramatic income inequality, the primary challenges faced by schools in Kolkata include poor water quality, high population density, limited physical space for sanitation facilities, and a tumultuous political environment.

Students in Kolkata bring soap from home to create conversations and buy-in from their families.

**INDIA**

**KOLKATA**

**BY THE NUMBERS**

1,200 SCHOOLS
450,000 STUDENTS

95% of the city’s schools had access to water. 70% of schools had water that tested positive for Total Coliform, and 56% tested positive for E. coli.

55% of schools had a handwashing basin on the school premises, only 43% had a single functioning tap, and only 6% had any soap for handwashing.

91% of schools had a toilet, 47% were not gender-segregated, 33% had no water for flushing, 34% had no lighting or ventilation, and 35% had no door or lock for privacy.

91% of toilets had no facilities for menstrual hygiene management.
Ethiopia, with 105 million people, is the second largest country in Africa and the twelfth largest country in the world by population. Some 50% of the national population is under age 18. Addis Ababa is the capital city, with approximately 4 million people. Diarrheal disease and respiratory infections account for approximately 36% of deaths among children aged 5-14 in Ethiopia, indicating a need for improved water, sanitation and hygiene.

Amidst rapid growth and insufficient infrastructure for the urban poor, the primary challenges faced by schools in Addis Ababa include water scarcity, inconsistent electricity supply, and limited availability of manufactured goods, including water filtration systems and spare parts, available on the local market.

Splash Hygiene Club members leading recurring handwashing training sessions.

BY THE NUMBERS

450 SCHOOLS
450,000 STUDENTS

6% of schools had reliable sources of water and 10% of schools had soap at handwashing stations.

57% of girls’ toilets had lockable doors, and only 7% had any water for flushing or cleaning.

For boys’ toilets, only 51% had locks, and only 1% had water for flushing or cleaning.

86% of girl toilets had no facilities for menstrual hygiene management.

42% of students reported being unable to use the toilet during school at all due to unhygienic conditions.
WE ACTUALLY SEE THIS AS AN AMAZING OPPORTUNITY

THE FACE OF POVERTY IS SHIFTING

THE POOREST OF THE POOR ARE NO LONGER ISOLATED IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. THEY ARE INCREASING IN CITIES.