

Monthly Newsletter – Sept & October 2021

EVENTS

Global Handwashing Day 2021: Our Future is at Hand – Let's Move Forward Together



Global Handwashing Day (GHD) is celebrated each year on October 15 to increase global awareness of the importance of handwashing with soap. The theme this year was “*Our Future is at Hand – Let's Move Forward Together*” recognizing the global movement promoting handwashing as a key method to prevent COVID-19 transmission, and the need to keep building on this momentum even after the pandemic. Water For People India organized several events to spread knowledge about the importance of

clean water and the availability of soap in public schools, health care facilities, and other public places.

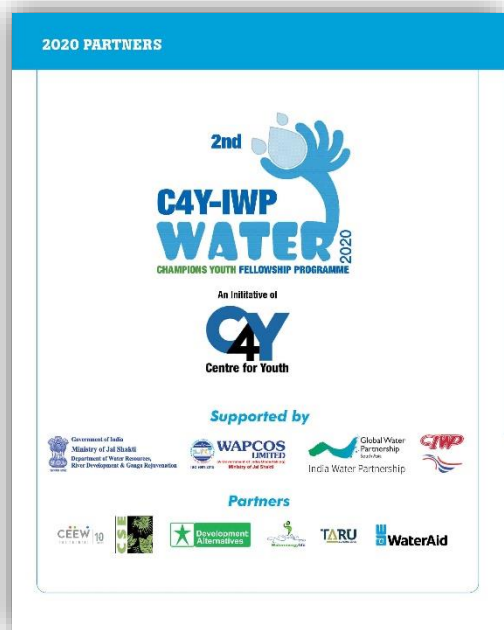
In collaboration with National Stock Exchange Foundation, Water For People India Trust celebrated GHD with a group of young boys facilitated by community volunteers at Barhra village in Khoyrasol Block, Birbhum District, West Bengal. Volunteers gave a brief speech on the importance of handwashing and demonstrated the simplicity and value of washing hands properly. They also spread awareness about building sinks and tippy taps. COVID-19 protocol was maintained throughout the session.



Under *The Water Initiative* project, GHD was celebrated with students and teachers in Doma and Jarida Ashramshalas in Chikhaldara block, Amravati district, Maharashtra. To make the event more interesting and creative, decoration was done in both the Ashramshalas using rangoli. A series of events were organized including a drawing competition, games, and demonstration of handwashing steps. Students enthusiastically participated in the

activities and shared their doubts and views about personal hygienic practices, especially handwashing with soap, as one of the key life-saving behaviours. Students were given a headband to wear in the form of a crown with catchy slogans to disseminate key aspects of handwashing and reinforce positive WASH behaviours. Around 120 people including students and teachers participated in the event.

▪ **Water Champions Youth Fellowship 2021: Creating a Cadre of Young Sustainability Professionals towards India's Water Concerns**



Dissemination of proper water education to the masses in general and the youth, in particular, could be useful in addressing the issues related to environmental conflict, climate change and sustainable development. To foster and empower sustainable youth leadership in India and build their capacities on developing sustainable solutions for water security, Centre for Youth (C4Y) invited graduates and post-graduates of environmental engineering, environmental management, environmental sciences, and water management from across the country for Cohort 3.0 of C4Y Water Champions Youth Fellowship 2021.

The fellowship programme was implemented with a host of premier organizations in water resources management sector- India Water Partnership and – Development Alternatives (DA); Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH); WaterAid India; Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) to name a few. Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India, and WAPCOS Limited also supported the fellowship for strengthening and scaling its reach. C4Y organized a virtual session on September 22. The session aimed to contribute to enhancing the capacities, knowledge of the youths and to develop a comprehensive understanding of the water sector concerns and possible solutions in the country.

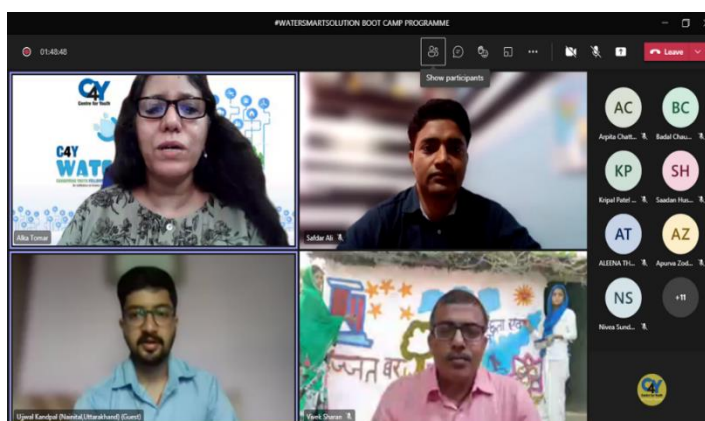
The thrust of these sessions focused on:

(i) Organization's Focus and Modalities of Execution of Projects/ Programmes

(ii) WASH Programme - Verticals, Focus Areas, Impacts & Partnerships

(iii) Water-related Flagship Programme Insights - Water Smart & Wise Solutions Demonstrated

(iv) Key Takeaways for Youth in India - aligning with Strategy



During the virtual session, Mr. Vivek Sharan, State-in-Charge, Bihar represented Water For People India and shared his journey in the domain of water and sanitation. He further stressed on capacity-building initiatives to create a water-wise and waste prudent society and to create a community of practice by developing implementable solutions. Mr. Safdar Ali, SBCC Specialist Water For People India also oriented the participants about behaviour change communication (BCC), the implementation strategy to achieve desired results, whilst sharing experiences from the field.

MEETINGS

■ Meeting with State Government officials - West Bengal



Water For People India is keen to pursue its strategy of scaling its impact through the Technical Support Unit (TSU) approach. A meeting was held on September 16 with the senior govt. officials to apprise Water For People India's past work and future projects. Mr. Surendra Gupta, Secretary, PHED and Mr. Animesh Bhattacharya, Chief Engineer, PHED were appreciative of Water For People India's work and provided suggestions to play a more supportive role for the implementation of Jal

Jeevan Mission/ Jal Swapno. They showed keen interest in capacity-building activities in all the districts with the support of Water For People India. An impactful presentation was made in the presence of Mr. Pulak Roy, Minister in charge, PHED, CE, and other officials of the Planning Department. The proposition was strongly endorsed by the CE and the Planning Department official.

■ Convergence Meeting with ASHA workers, ANMs

Water For People India Trust organized a meeting on September 16 with ASHA workers and ANMs at Palashbuni Namo-Bauripara ICDS in Khoyrasol block, Birbhum district, West Bengal. The objective was to establish a rapport with ASHA workers and ANMs and to delineate their roles and responsibilities. The meeting also discussed the challenges experienced by pregnant and lactating women and the importance of immunization.



In addition, a meeting was held in Purba Barkala Anganwadi centres with mothers to generate awareness on ways to maintain personal hygiene, taking care of children during COVID-19, and the necessity of cleanliness in the surroundings of tube well for keeping water safe.

■ Strengthening of VWSC



Under Project *Everyone Forever - Water Initiative* supported by NSE Foundation, a meeting was held on October 7 in Parsundi Gram Panchayat, in Khoyrasol block (Birbhum) West Bengal. The meeting aimed to strengthen the Village Water and Sanitation Committee (VWSC) at the GP level and to orient them on their roles and responsibilities for addressing WASH issues. The meeting was conducted in several segments to explain the objectives followed with a group discussion in small groups. 26 VWSC members including Pradhan, Upa-Pradhan, Sansad members,

Nirman Sahayak, Executive Assistant, Secretary, ASHA Facilitator, Social worker, SHG member, etc. attended the meeting.

CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES

■ Mission Paani: Building a Pool of Local Artists, Capacitating Farmers & WUCs

Water For People India Trust under Project *Mission Paani* in Nalanda district, Bihar organized a capacity building workshop from October 18-30 in Patna for the local artists. Two teams comprising of 24 local artists were trained by renowned theatre personalities to sensitize communities on key WASH behaviours through street plays. The 13-day workshop was designed to raise the potential and build confidence in the artists to help them snap out of their shells and showcase their creativity freely. The workshop



honed their soft skills, making them confident to communicate and perform in front of the audience.



After completion of the workshop, Rimpala Devi, a participant shared her experience, *"I am from a small village in Nalanda and have a keen interest in theatre, hence I came to attend this workshop. In the beginning, I was very shy and scared. But thanks to this workshop, in these 13 days, I witnessed many changes in myself. I genuinely feel confident to talk and work with new people and perform for a variety of audiences. The experience that I have gained has made me more aware and sensitive towards several issues. It has stimulated my creativity and thought process."*

In the month of October, Water For People India organized 15 farmers club meetings to promote water-saving practices in irrigation through the adoption of latest technologies like drip kits, mini sprinklers, construction of soak pits, organic farming, and use of surface water. In addition, five mini sprinkler kits were provided to the farmers, which would help save 85% of groundwater. Around 200 tetra bags were given to promote organic farming leading to less consumption of water. Through various methods of agricultural water management and meetings, around 400 farmers were reached. Meetings were also held with 18 Water User Committees on monthly contribution, operation and maintenance of water point, as well wastewater management impacting around 250 community members.



▪ Community Strengthening through Interpersonal Communication



Under *Project Sheohar*, the Social Art team is regularly interacting with communities focusing on Water User Committees (WUCs), Joint Liability Groups (JLGs), Farmers Club (FC), and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) for reinforcement of positive WASH behaviours. Field facilitators are the main change agents at the community level. Through Interpersonal Communication (IPC) community has been educated about safe water storage and handling practices, regular usage of toilets, and handwashing at five critical times. They interact with local communities through IEC materials and a newly launched mobile app - **eba**at. Regular follow-ups and community meetings are being done to sensitize them on

safe WASH practices.

▪ Training on SLWM

Water For People India in collaboration with Sarvshree Seva Sadan conducted training on Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM) on September 14 at Nagar Parishad Hall, Sheohar district, Bihar. Around 45 *Nirmal Bandhus* (toilet cleaners) participated in the program. The training sessions were facilitated by the resource persons of ACE and Water For People India team. The training aimed to:

- (i) Acclimatize participants on SLWM and its application under *Project Sheohar*.



- (ii) Develop conceptual understanding of the participants on developing SLWM skills, tools, and their application.
- (iii) Build capacity of field staff on making effective SLWM skills.

A wide range of topics was covered during the training including - types of solid waste, steps to solid waste management, treatment of segregated waste, benefits of solid waste management, types of liquid waste in rural areas, description of 4 Rs in SWM, value chain mechanism, Open Defecation Free and Sustaining ODF environment, SLWM practice in rural areas, Solid waste management model for rural areas, and waste segregation. SLWM is one of the key components of Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) Grameen, launched to bring improvement in cleanliness, hygiene, and the general quality of life in rural areas. The training ended with a Q&A session for all participants, particularly *Nirmal Bandhus* to help focus on SLWM along with ODF activities.

▪ District Level Workshop for Teachers



A district-level training program was conducted by Water For People India for school staff and School Education Committee (SEC) members from 21-23 September with support of Mahila Vikash Gramin Shilpkala Prashichhan Sansthan in Sheohar district, Bihar. The workshop aimed to deliberate and discuss the existing practices and challenges of school WASH, O&M, ways to manage funds, and engaging *Nirmal Bandhus* (toilet cleaners) in schools on a regular basis. The meeting also discussed solutions to mitigate challenges and ensure sustainability. Around 200 teachers and SEC members participated in the workshop.

▪ Implementation of Village Water Safety Security Plan

Drinking water is a precious and scarce resource that needs to be protected, kept free from contamination, and used carefully without wasting. Safe drinking water is key to ensuring improved public health. Village Water Safety Security Plan (VWSSP) is useful to address water quality problems, to help operate and maintain the water supply scheme, and to identify and estimate the cost of improvements (investments) that are needed. A training was organized by Water For People India Trust on October 1 in Nakrakonda Gram Panchayat, Khoyrasol Block, Birbhum district, West Bengal to capacitate and give support to the villagers for preparing VWSSP. The objective was to ensure safe drinking water in the gram panchayat, to map out the natural resources, discuss the problems faced by the community people and incorporate VWSSP in the Gram Panchayat Development Plan. The training was attended by Gram Panchayat members including Pradhan,



Upa-Pradhan, Sansad members, Nirman Sahayak, Executive Assistant, Secretary, and social workers.

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

Completion of PWSS in Hirdamal Village



Hirdamal village situated in Chikhaldara Block, Amravati district, Maharashtra has been provided with safe drinking water through a piped water supply scheme (PWSS) under *The Water Initiative* – a joint partnership between Water For People India Trust and Colgate Palmolive (India) Limited. A source sustainability test was conducted to provide water to 140 households. As part of the intervention, villagers through the government-supported MGNREGA scheme provided labour for pipeline excavation and laying the village distribution line along with rising main pipeline. A functional household tap connection with a stand post has been provided to every household connected to 25,000 litres water storage tank by the district rural water supply department. Post completion of PWSS, on September 24 the scheme was handed over to Gram Panchayat and Village Water Sanitation Committee. On September 23, communities in Hirdamal village participated in a mass cleaning drive. The community-level village cleaning proved a very motivating process for all the villagers to contribute and generate a positive environment by keeping their surroundings clean.

Awareness Program on O&M of Community Toilet Blocks

Under Project *Mission Sunehra Kal* supported by ITC Limited, Water For People India Trust organized a community-driven awareness program on community toilet operation & maintenance on October 7 at the Anganwadi Centre of Chumulpukur Community, Chandrahati I, Hooghly district, West Bengal. A handwashing demonstration was also carried out for emphasising hand hygiene practices



among 30 participants from the community with COVID-19 precautionary measures. Similarly, awareness programmes were organized in various slums including 8½ No Bustee, Sonai, Taratala under Ward-80 in Kolkata. The focus was on the sustainability of renovated toilet blocks through

the strengthening of operation & maintenance system. IEC materials, flex banners, and leaflets were used to make the participants understand the importance of user tariffs for maintenance to keep the assets – toilet, urinals, changing rooms - in good working condition.

▪ **Community-Led Approach to Sanitation**



Two Community Led Approach to Sanitation (CLAS) programs were organized on October 5-6 at Fatepur Primary School, Digsui Hoera Gram Panchayat and Tegharia Primary School, Saptagram Gram Panchayat in Hooghly district, West Bengal. Total 80 participants including school teachers, MTA members, Village Education Committee members, and students participated.

During the program, both schools agreed to collect a contribution from parents for school development. Meanwhile, gram panchayat proposed to provide support to clean school toilet blocks and install a submersible pump. The Village Education Committee and MTA members shared their feedback regarding the operation and maintenance of WASH facilities and assured to provide support in donating materials for the same. Leaflets related to sanitation and hygiene were distributed among the participants during the CLAS activity.
