



Handwashing activities done under the awareness raising activities on the risk and prevention of COVID-19 in the neighbourhood of Bahache (Djibouti city), Djibouti © IOM 2020

During 2020, IOM WASH programmes worldwide were responsible for providing WASH services in camps, camp-like settings and host communities, while also boosting regular operations to contribute to mitigating the spread of COVID-19 at these locations and at points of entry (PoE).

Safe water, sanitation and hygiene services proved to be essential in the response to COVID-19, paired with adherence to COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures (hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, cleaning and disinfection, and physical distancing).

IOM teams faced unprecedented challenges that travel restrictions and national and regional lockdowns imposed on the mobilization of human resources and materials and equipment. Other challenges included increased demand for water for handwashing and cleaning and disinfection, increased need for WASH Non-Food Items (NFIs) such as soap and chlorine, and increased hygiene promotion required for effective Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) activities, aligned with local RCCE strategies, not only focused on COVID-19, but also addressing other recurrent diseases which many countries faced simultaneously.

COVID-19 emphasized the importance of the strategic principles of the WASH Strategic Plan 2019-2022, requiring **immediate** life-saving responses to control the spread of disease, using **appropriate** interventions compatible with the needs of beneficiaries, that targeted the most vulnerable. It also required that solutions were **sustainable**, encouraging local ownership and imbedding knowledge within communities, given the likelihood of continuing threats from the pandemic, as well as other potential future disease outbreaks.

	2020
	53 Countries of operations
	21.5 M Estimated total individuals assisted

RESPONSE OVERVIEW

1.3 M
individuals assisted with access to latrines

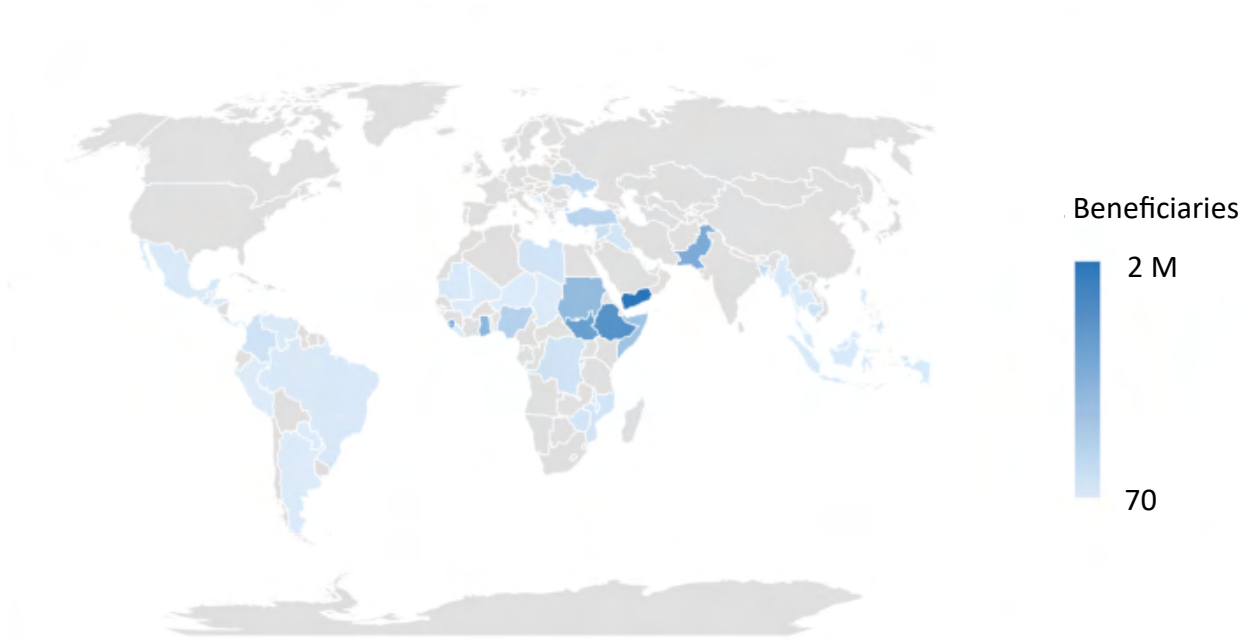
4.1 M
Individuals assisted with safe water

16 M
individuals served with hygiene promotion

4 M
Individuals served with sanitation services

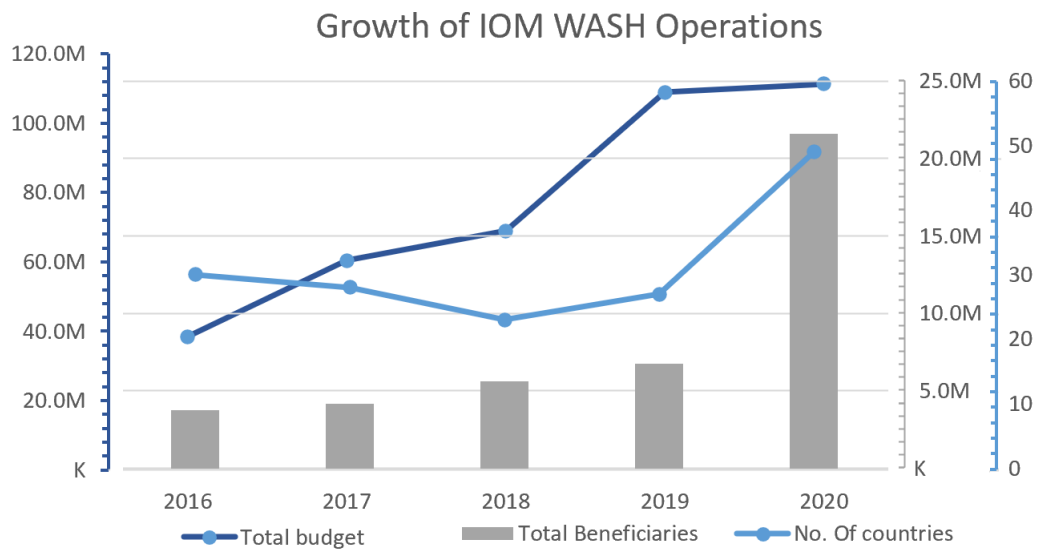
IOM WASH OPERATIONS WORLDWIDE

In 2020, IOM delivered WASH services to **over 21 M** people in **53** countries.



IOM WASH GROWTH 2016-2020

Over the past 5 years, IOM WASH programming has steadily increased its size and footprint, registering an annual **growth rate of 24.4%** in the number of beneficiaries reached.



GLOBAL PROJECTS

In 2020 IOM WASH began implementation of two new global projects, 1) the Innovation Norway funded project, **Greening humanitarian responses through recovery, repair and recycling of solar lamps in displacement settings** – “the E-waste Project,” which aims to respond to the problem of ill-managed disposal of solar products in displacement settings, and 2) the **IOM Gender Inclusion and GBV risk mitigation Toolkit for WASH programming** – “the GBV Toolkit,” which, through a human rights-centred approach, provides guidance and support to WASH programmes to achieve appropriate and sustainable solutions that, through meaningful design and adaptations, contribute to mitigating GBV risks.

These projects were selected given their alignment with the *IOM WASH Strategic Plan 2019-2022*, being focussed on drawing from the innovative capacity of the private and other sectors for the E-waste Project (in line with Strategic Objective 3) and building the capacity of international and local networks of WASH professionals in GBV through the GBV Toolkit (in line with Strategic Objective 1).

GREENING HUMANITARIAN RESPONSES THROUGH RECOVERY, REPAIR, AND RECYCLING OF SOLAR PRODUCTS IN CAMPS

The E-waste Project looks at creating a circular economy for solar products, while prolonging energy access, creating employment opportunities, supporting alternative livelihoods, increasing knowledge transfer and promoting environmental sustainability. It also has high-level aims of providing evidence to replicate solutions in other displacement settings, eventually creating a global reach and to scale up beyond solar products to other types of electronic waste, as well as to inform humanitarian sustainable procurement policies.

Phase 1 research was undertaken March to November 2020, which included a market dialogue to assess best practices and challenges faced by the private sector in creating a circular economy for solar e-waste, as well as field data collection across five camps in Uganda and Kenya that mapped solar waste from procurement to disposal. Key research findings included a recommendation of location for the pilot implementation (Kakuma camp, Kenya), and a list of barriers and potential innovation opportunities that could be explored through the pilot.

The Call for Innovation Partnerships, released in February 2021, invited potential partners to submit innovative solutions to the challenge, with the aim of IOM partnering with multiple stakeholders; creating synergies between different aspects of the waste stream and capitalizing on, and growing, previously siloed efforts. The approach also promotes innovation by using an innovative procurement process, being the first IOM project to utilize this procurement model. Part of the innovative procurement process included an Ideation Jam with all potential partners to challenge their thinking and come up with new ways to look at solutions. (Refer figure below).

IOM GENDER INCLUSION AND GBV RISK MITIGATION TOOLKIT FOR WASH PROGRAMMING

The Toolkit was developed by the IOM Global WASH Support Team in collaboration with the IOM GBV team. It aims at providing comprehensive guidance, ranging from preparedness, to project design and planning, to implementation and monitoring and evaluation (M&E). The Toolkit also upholds to IOM Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) standards and the Code of Conduct, as well as IOM's existing guidance on GBV, such as the IOM Institutional Framework for Addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Crises (GBViC). The Toolkit and associated resources are intended to be contextualized by each mission for greater effectiveness, and coupled with focused trainings and specialized support when needed.

GLOBAL SOLAR AND WATER INITIATIVE (GLOSWI)

During 2020, all GLOSWI services and products were made available through a newly created webpage (thesolarhub.org). The mark of 1,000 WASH engineers trained in the use of solar water pumping solutions was reached during the year. The number of quality technical queries solved, increased by 33% and a record number of 230 organizations (2/3 humanitarian NGOs) from 72 countries benefited from one or more GLOSWI activities.



“E-waste” Ideation Jam graphic recording © IOM 2020/ SmartUp Visuals for IOM WASH

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

COVID-19

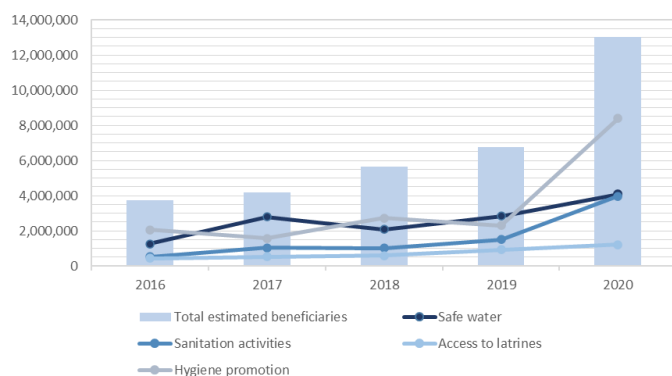
To assist COVID-19 activities, the Global WASH Support Team developed internal technical guidance to address specific IPC measures (*Handwashing, Cleaning and Disinfection and Waste Management*) and Risk Communication and Community Engagement (*RCCE*) during COVID-19, Ebola and cholera outbreak situations. The comparison of different requirements for these three diseases was a new way of presenting guidelines, with the intent to make clear distinctions between responses to these common diseases.

Due to the leading role that IOM has at POE and a gap in guidance available to comprehensively address WASH requirements during disease outbreaks, and specifically COVID-19, the Global WASH Support Team developed guidance for *WASH services at POE during COVID-19*.

To provide programmatic guidance for project development and adherence to the frameworks (such as the IOM Global Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan—SPRP), the Global WASH Support Team also developed a light guidance on *IOM WASH response in the context of COVID-19*.

In addition, the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (M&E) Framework was updated to include COVID-19 statements and indicators.

COVID-19 increased the awareness of communities to improve hygiene practices worldwide. In IOM, awareness sessions for adults and children, and the production of contextualized information, education and communication (IEC) materials on COVID-19 preventive measures and other hygiene-related topics have been enhanced in bigger WASH programmes and incorporated in countries with no previous WASH projects. This resulted in 8.4 M beneficiaries reached with hygiene promotion activities in 2020, and 501,600 households receiving WASH emergency items.



IOM WASH—Hygiene Promotion growth over the years © IOM WASH Highlights



"Approaches to deliver IOM WASH in emergencies" © YouTube

HUMANITARIAN-DEVELOPMENT-PEACE NEXUS

The *Global WASH Cluster WASH Sector Roadmap 2020-2025* highlights the importance of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDPN) ("the nexus"), indicating an urgent need to provide WASH responses rooted in preparedness and resilience to align humanitarian efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the commitments of the Grand Bargain and the United Nations New Ways of Working. WASH interventions are uniquely positioned to move from delivering aid to reducing risk, vulnerability and overall needs. By providing tangible services as an entry point for delivering basic needs, additional aspects such as governance, institutional capacity building, job creation and conflict resolution can be reached simultaneously.

In 2020, the Global WASH Support Team, in consultation with the HDPN Advisor at HQ level, developed the *Position Paper on WASH and the HDPN*. It presents IOM's position on where complementary commonalities between humanitarian, development and peace interventions can be practically aligned across eight programmatic areas: principles and goals, timing and outcomes, stakeholders, needs assessments and planning, WASH services, governance and institutions, financing and monitoring and evaluation. It is intended that the position paper allows WASH practitioners and decision makers within IOM to reflect on their programmes' contribution to the HDPN, enabling a discussion and stocktaking of lessons learned to work together to develop tools to operationalize it.

INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES

The IOM Global WASH Support Team, in consultation with the WASH Steering Committee, updated the WASH section of the IOM Emergency Manual to incorporate programmatic approaches to IOM WASH and cross-cutting themes such as the HDPN, Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP), Climate Change and the environment, gender equity, marginalization and GBV and protection. It also provides updated links to relevant published technical guidance under each technical aspect of WASH interventions. Given the complexity of the integration of approaches, programming, technical operations and cross-cutting themes within WASH, the animation on *Approaches to deliver IOM WASH in emergencies* was published to show how the various dimensions work together.

ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS

Over the course of the year, emphasis was given to strategic partnerships and collaboration with academic institutions and research-oriented projects. The Global WASH Support Team explored collaborations with universities in the United Kingdom, South Africa and Thailand to examine how research and innovation could potentially contribute to IOM missions and the use of new technologies. Of particular note is *elrha's Innovation Challenge: Faecal sludge treatment solutions for disease outbreaks in densely populated humanitarian settings*, in collaboration with the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) and the WASH mission in Bangladesh.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

DOOR TO DOOR SOAP KIT DISTRIBUTION TO AVOID MASS GATHERINGS DURING COVID-19 IN BANGLADESH



House-to-house distribution of soap kits in Cox's Bazar. Bangladesh © IOM 2020

Soap is one of the essential materials for maintaining personal hygiene. In the early phase of COVID-19 the usual distributions from a central point were stopped to avoid public gatherings and disease transmission, and there was a government regulation for limiting staffs' access to camps. At the same time, it became more important that refugees were receiving enough soap to practice handwashing.

In response, IOM switched from a centralized distribution approach (taking place in designated sites where people were gathering) to a door-to-door distribution system. Starting from March 2020, IOM implementation partners have been reaching approximately 58,479 households with soap kits every month through this new modality, with 98% of households reporting having received soap at their doorsteps. Each soap kit contains standardized quantity of bathing and laundry soap, meant to cover one month's need for an average family, in accordance with the local WASH sector guidance. Handwashing with soap or chlorinated water is undertaken before handing over the soap kits. This approach is a unique innovation in camp settings in Cox's Bazar, where the distribution is led by beneficiaries, with community participation being effective in the distribution activities. The distribution modality is also well accepted by the government authorities and has been included in the WASH sector strategy. The door-to-door distribution also has social benefits, with people with a disability and the elderly not needing to move from their shelter, and women are feeling safer not needing to go into crowded distribution sites.



Handwashing with chlorinated water before receiving soap kits and providing thumb print on muster roll in Cox's Bazar. Bangladesh © IOM 2020

WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT IN TURKEY

Of the 2.7 million IDPs in Northwest Syria (NWS), approximately 1.4 million are living in tents in self-settled camps which are prone to large-scale annual flooding. Additionally, they lack adequate water and sanitation infrastructure. Subsequently, significant amounts of sewage water from these camps is running into open streams and creating breeding sites for mosquitos, phlebotomine sand flies and other water-borne vectors. As a response, IDPs were discharging the wastewater into open channels or were excavating open cesspits and covering them with plastic sheeting, posing both safety and health risks. In some cases, it was being discharged into the soil within the camps without being treated. In other cases, wastewater was being de-sludged and trucked to agricultural land without being treated and being fed back into the food consumed by IDPs, leading to health issues such as diarrhea.

As a response in 2020, IOM carried out two projects to tackle the wastewater issue. Firstly, to mitigate flooding in the camps, IOM provided camp infrastructure upgrades to 42 IDP sites. This included gravelling roads, rehabilitating/constructing culverts, constructing drainage channels, and raising tents off the ground. Secondly, to provide a more sustainable and long-lasting solution to wastewater treatment, IOM designed and constructed decentralized sewer systems including pilot multi-chamber septic tanks in 15 IDP sites. Focus has been on monitoring the effectiveness of the septic tanks, to optimize their performance and design possible further steps. IOM is conducting this monitoring through guiding an implementing partner to collect samples of wastewater from each site periodically, which are brought to the one laboratory in NWS which has the capacity to test the samples' physical, biological, and chemical parameters. The data being collected is utilized to develop the septic tanks further, improve public health conditions, and protect the environment from the damage of untreated wastewater.



Construction works of multi-chamber septic tank in an IDP site in Idleb – Northwest Syria © IOM 2020, through WATAN Foundation.



A girl in an informal camp washes her hands at a handwashing station with water and soap distributed by IOM, Syria © IOM 2020

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