



# Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

## AREA OF FOCUS STRATEGY

**In 2010, the United Nations explicitly recognized access to water and sanitation as a fundamental human right - yet 3.5 billion people still lack access to safely managed sanitation and 2.2 billion lack access to clean drinking water.** Mismanaged freshwater resources and climate change have only worsened the crisis. Nearly 4 billion people – two-thirds of the global population – experience water scarcity for at least one month each year, placing enormous strains on local health systems, food production, school attendance, and livelihoods. More than 1.4 million deaths annually are attributed to diseases spread through unsafe water, poor sanitation, and lack of hygiene, disproportionately impacting women and children under 5. These conditions contribute to an estimated US\$260 billion in annual global economic losses, reinforcing cycles of poverty and inequality.

### OUR VISION

**Rotary envisions a water-secure world, driven by locally led collaboration among governments, water and sanitation service providers, and civil society— who have the commitment, accountability, skills and financing to provide sustainable, climate-resilient, and safe water, sanitation, and hygiene services for all.**



Our water, sanitation, and hygiene strategy aligns with UN Sustainable Development



**Goal 6:  
Clean water and sanitation**

## ROTARY'S STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Rotary is taking action—but the scale of the crisis demands more than business as usual. Discrete project-oriented endeavors alone will not achieve transformative, measurable impact within our communities by 2030. With the support of our global partners, Rotary members are calling for a strategic shift in how we address the world's water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) challenges together. This shift moves beyond isolated projects toward a collective approach that leverages Rotary's unique local and global networks to mobilize resources, convene diverse stakeholders, and catalyze change through advocacy. With proper coordination systems, the technical skills, expertise, and local knowledge of our Rotary Action Groups and The Rotary Foundation Cadre of Technical Advisers can be fully utilized for good. Equally, we are poised to scale and disseminate the learnings, tools, and impact data gained from our 14-year strategic partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Rotary's Global WASH Strategy answers this call for a strategic shift in WASH through locally led, collaborative, and sustainable solutions that build resilient communities, where no one is left behind.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Rotary's water, sanitation, and hygiene strategy seeks to:

**01**  
**Coordinate regional activity and focus on WASH in schools and healthcare facilities.**

**02**  
**Move from infrastructure-focused interventions (taps and toilets) to programs that strengthen local leadership, financing, governance, technical skills, knowledge, and behaviors long term.**

**03**  
**Strengthen WASH advocacy within Rotary service projects**

**04**  
**Cultivate partnerships for collective action and greater impact in WASH.**