



AGA KHAN FOUNDATION



एक कदम स्वच्छता की ओर

The Aga Khan Foundation's Comprehensive Sanitation Initiative: Supporting the Swachh Bharat Mission



700,000

Target: Improved sanitation facilities for 700,000 people across six states



140,000 +

Progress: To date, over 140,000 households have gained access to improved sanitation



3,000 +

Hygiene education regularised in over 3,000 schools

www.akdn.org/india

India AKF's Comprehensive Sanitation Initiative

For the past 40 years, the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) has been working to address the challenges of water and sanitation in India. It has developed significant expertise in the fields of improving access to drinking water, sanitation and hygiene promotion. AKF's work also supports the sanitation target of the Sustainable Development Goals, which calls for safely managed sanitation facilities for all by 2030 and the elimination of open defecation.

In 2015, in response to the Government of India's flagship programme, AKF launched its Comprehensive Sanitation Initiative. Over five years, the Initiative facilitated access to improved sanitation and hygiene for over 700,000 people in six states through direct field level interventions and technical assistance. A key component is generating demand for improved hygiene practices, thereby tackling age-old norms and transforming long-standing behaviour change that improves the quality of life.

Key Approaches

Community engagement and ownership is crucial to achieving universal sanitation coverage, and AKF pays strong attention to this at every stage. Women are key drivers of change in their communities and are essential in helping spread messages on the importance of safe sanitation and hygiene practices. In addition to this, AKF is also building the capacity of local community institutions to enable them to institutionalise decentralised planning and implementation of the programme.

Lending Technical Assistance to District Governments to Accelerate Outcomes

In Uttar Pradesh, AKF is also extending technical assistance to the Government in five districts of Bahraich, Shravasti, Gonda, Lakhimpurkheri and Balrampur to achieve Open Defecation Free (ODF) outcomes. To date, 725,000+ households have been indirectly reached. The efforts in these districts are directed towards extending support to finalising the annual implementation and behaviour change communication plans, strengthening the district's monitoring and review systems, as well as in extending support to masons, community volunteers and PRI functionaries.

A similar approach is being adopted in 17 other blocks of Bihar, where AKF and its partners are leveraging their previous experience of having demonstrated the achievement of ODF status at scale in the Pusa block of Samastipur District, working closely with the District Administration. It should be noted that AKF was awarded the FICCI India Sanitation Coalition Award for best not profit engagement (for an integrated block-level sanitation model) and the Dainik Jagran CSR Award 2019 for its work on sanitation. AKF was also recognised for its School Hygiene Education programme with the Banega Swasth India Award by NDTV and Dettol.

Creating Demand and Changing Behaviours

To raise awareness on key hygiene behaviours, AKF also developed a number of behaviour-change



AKF's Comprehensive Sanitation Initiative has helped 638 habitations become open defecation free (ODF). **Left:** In Muzaffarpur, Bihar, Ganesh Kumar and his mother Sudhanshini Devi stand in front of their two newly constructed toilets. **Right:** Over 1,800 village masons have been trained in appropriate toilet construction techniques under the Initiative.



The Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) Initiative has reached over 25,000 women and adolescent girls. Innovative tools such as games are being employed to drive behaviour change communication in programme villages.

communication materials, which are being used to generate awareness on the importance of sanitation as well as build people’s knowledge on health and hygiene. Using a combination of interactive games and tools, such as street plays, puppetry and songs, AKF is working to strengthen the adoption of improved practices. Through a cadre of para-workers, AKF is also raising peoples’ understanding of the importance of safe sanitation and hygiene and mobilising community members to spread these messages.

Promoting Menstrual Hygiene Management

AKF is working to strengthen the knowledge and capacity of women and girls on menstrual hygiene management. A menstrual hygiene management kit – which comprises information material, interactive tools and menstrual hygiene product samples – helps AKF para-workers and government front-line health workers to help normalise menstruation and disseminate related messaging in a sensitive and engaging manner. The normalisation campaign is done through the platform of women’s self-help groups and adolescent girls’ groups, which provide an environment where discussions can take place freely. Women learn ways to manage menstruation hygienically, as well as address harmful socio-cultural norms, which enables them to participate fully in daily life.

Working on WASH in Schools

AKF is working to create an enhanced learning environment for schoolchildren by improving water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure. To date, model WASH facilities that are gender and height appropriate and barrier free have been facilitated in about 90 schools. Work is underway across 150 schools over the next two years.

In the same schools, AKF is also supporting teachers and School Management Committees develop norms for the facilities’ operation and maintenance and to regularise hygiene promotion in schools. AKF is refurbishing school sanitation blocks, using the Swachh Bharat: Swachh Vidyalaya (Clean India: Clean Schools) technical guidelines, ensuring they are gender-sensitive, inclusive and accessible by students who are differently-abled. AKF is also partnering on the Banega Swacch India Campaign, launched by Reckitt Benckiser. Under the initiative, AKF is working to mainstream regular hygiene promotion activities in schools through the introduction of games, rallies, competitions and demonstrations. It is also building teacher’s capacities to introduce and streamline hygiene education, while also engaging closely with the SMCs and parents to seek their support and buy in and active participation in their programme. This has resulted in student committees being empowered to drive forward

these initiatives in their schools and students becoming hygiene messengers in their communities. AKF is also piloting several initiatives in schools around composting, plastic waste management, soap banks and child-led monitoring. These pilots align to the five core themes of the hygiene education curriculum to create hygiene hubs and holistic development spaces at schools.

Demonstrating Models for Urban Sanitation

In urban areas, AKF is working with local authorities and communities to refurbish existing community toilet complexes – and where required construct new facilities – and develop community managed systems for their operation and maintenance. In Patna, Bihar, it has developed a fee-based community toilet complex and helped the community establish a trust to oversee it.

In Bihar, AKF is also working on building the capacity of urban local bodies on decentralised governance and effective solid waste management. It is also demonstrating a financially sustainable model for decentralised solid waste management. In this Initiative, which is supported by the European Commission, AKF is working with the local urban entities to build their capacity to deliver solid waste management services, while also engaging closely with key stakeholders such as SHGs, ragpickers, waste pickers and community members in order to raise awareness on improved practices around management of solid waste.

As part of the initiative, AKF is also demonstrating a model of decentralised waste management in two intervention wards. It supports the replication of these efforts widely across other intervention geographies. To date, over 600 households have initiated composting and over 230 informal ragpickers are being streamlined into the formal waste economy. The major focus area is health and safety.



The school sanitation initiative has reached over 434,000 children.

Strengthening Sanitation Service Delivery

The programme has also focused on strengthening service delivery by facilitating training of 1,800+ village masons on appropriate toilet construction techniques, thereby creating skilled resources within programme villages. AKF is also engaging with local enterprises and rural sanitary marts to ensure availability of construction materials and availability of enough trained motivators in the villages.

Real Time Tracking of Usage

Real time tracking of the household usage of toilets constructed under the initiative is being undertaken through a mobile-based application Akvo. This is helping AKF monitor the progress, track usage patterns, monitor behaviours and identify areas for improvement.

Support AKDN

Partnerships

When AKDN refines its development approach in a given area, it looks to partners to help expand the scale. A significant portion of the funding for its activities therefore comes from national governments, multilateral institutions and private sector partners. For more information, visit: akdn.org/partners

Individuals

Individuals can support the AKDN. For more information, visit: akdn.org/support

For more information

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About AKDN

Founded and guided by His Highness the Aga Khan, the **Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN)** brings together a number of development agencies, institutions, and programmes that work primarily in the poorest parts of Asia and Africa. **It works in over 30 countries for the common good of all citizens, regardless of their gender, origin or religion.** A central feature of the AKDN's approach to development is to design and implement strategies in which its different agencies participate in particular settings to help those in need achieve a level of self-reliance and improve the quality of life.