



# Bhutan Hand Hygiene Snapshot

## JMP 2020 data: household, school and HCF overview



### Household

**92%**

of households have a basic handwashing facility, with more households having facilities in rural settings (93%) than urban (89%).



### School

**82%**

of schools have handwashing facilities. However, JMP reports insufficient data.



### Monastic institutions

**97%**






JMP reports insufficient data. of monastic institutions in the country have handwashing facilities with taps connected to a mains water supply system. The remaining 3% use buckets and taps connected to portable tanks..

The national standard for handwashing facilities in schools is 1 tap:50 students.

One in five schools reportedly lack water for handwashing with soap.



## Enabling environment

	<h3>Policies</h3>	<p>The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2008 mandates the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) to ensure a safe and healthy environment for people of Bhutan. The Royal Decree of 1992 outlined the obligations of households to provide and maintain their own household sanitation. The Local Government (LG) Act of Bhutan 2009 significantly decentralized responsibilities for water supply, sanitation, hygiene and public health at the district level. Bhutan released the Sanitation and Hygiene Guidelines in 2014. National Sanitation and Hygiene Policy 2020 states that the concerned agencies in collaboration with the LG shall ensure safely managed sanitation services and basic hygiene facilities for all. A strategy to Leave No One Behind, FSM guidelines, National Strategy for WASH in HCF and Post Open Defecation Free (ODF) status also refers to hand hygiene practices.</p>
	<h3>Financing</h3>	<p>Nu.752.732 million (1 USD is 74.15 Nu) was allocated to WASH in the last five years (2013-2014 to 2018-2019). WASH programme spending increased from Nu. 571.816 million in 2013-2014 to Nu. 1,164.897 million in 2018-2019. There is no separate budget line for hygiene promotion.</p>
	<h3>Coordination</h3>	<p>Ministry of Health (MoH) and Ministry of Works and Human Settlement (MoWHS) have the overall responsibility to coordinate, monitor, evaluate, and review the implementation of hygiene under the National Sanitation and Hygiene Policy.</p> <p>The Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC) has an oversight role in mainstreaming hygiene in national development plans, policies, linking to international commitments, and mobilising resources. GNHC also coordinates the work of sanitation and hygiene agencies including development partners.</p>
	<h3>Monitoring</h3>	<p>MoH plans to review and integrate additional indicators into the Health Management Information System (HMIS) that will measure the overall performance of hand hygiene.</p>
	<h3>Capacity</h3>	<p>Health coordinators have been appointed in schools and monastic institutions to coordinate WASH activities. They have received training on WASH, which benefit students in schools and institutions in terms of their health and hygiene.</p> <p>MoH has a role in building the capacity of the relevant agencies including LGs to plan, implement and manage hygiene related initiatives. The capacity of health assistants is also built to carry out monitoring of hand hygiene practices and raise awareness during household visits, outreach clinics and other health related meetings and gatherings.</p>

## Hand hygiene behaviour change approaches

Almost all schools have health coordinators who conduct hygiene promotion sessions on hand hygiene and other health related programmes for students. Monks and nuns are also taught about the importance of hygiene practices.

In communities, hand hygiene is promoted through the 2-day 'Community Development for Health (CDH)' workshop implemented under the Rural Sanitation and Hygiene Programme (RSAHP). The workshop uses a participatory and self-discovery approach. The Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation approach has also been adapted to fit village and household settings in rural Bhutan. The RSAHP is led and coordinated by Public Health Engineering Division (PHED) of Department of Public Health, MoH in partnership with SNV and UNICEF. Social media is also used to disseminate hand hygiene messages.

Global Handwashing Day 2021 was observed through a mass handwashing with soap exercise with more than 200,000 students in all schools and monastic institutions across the country. The event was supported by RGoB, School Health & Nutrition Division, Ministry of Education (MoE), MoH and partners including SNV and UNICEF.

## Hand hygiene technologies and products

The private sector is involved as suppliers and manufacturers of hand hygiene facilities. For effective handwashing, soap must be easily available at all hand washing stations. Yet, some rural homes, institutions and schools still lack access to soap. As a pilot, a hot water pump enabling 70% energy saving has been installed in a monastic institution, which provides warm water for their daily personal hygiene.

## Hand hygiene response to COVID-19 pandemic

UNICEF's Health and WASH emergency responses to the COVID-19 pandemic have contributed to improving hand hygiene behaviours for infection prevention at health facilities, schools, monastic institutions and community level. A workshop on COVID-19 and WASH in schools/institutions was conducted for District Education Officers and Health Coordinators (monastic institutions) by the MoE in partnership with SNV and UNICEF. Hand hygiene promotion was conducted through mass campaigns (social media, mass media, entertainment platforms and events) for outreach to communities. UNICEF in collaboration with RGoB, developed IEC materials to promote safe hand hygiene practices. Additionally, videos, posters and flyers were developed including in braille on hand hygiene for people with a disability and care givers.

In anticipation of schools re-opening in 2021, RGoB ensured WASH interventions were included in the Safe School Guideline. Additionally, soap for handwashing was provided to schools and monastic institutions across the country. UNICEF supported the construction of WASH facilities in early childhood care and development centres in 15 districts. RGoB funded handwashing stations in schools across the country. Teachers and school staff support also improved hand hygiene services. Youth service centres have been equipped with handwashing stations benefitting the younger population that attend the centre every day.



In partnership with MoH, RHP, UNICEF, SNV, Mawongpa Water Solutions, Druk Water Solutions and Green Kitchen, handwashing stations with safe drinking water were installed in public places and 20 monastic institutions across the country.

The number of handwashing tap points has increased to 17,071 tap points (an increase of 77%) from 9,654 tap points before the on-set of the pandemic in early 2020.

To further strengthen the existing public health interventions in place to prevent importation and community transmission of infection, MoH in collaboration with UNICEF and WHO equipped 47 Primary Health Centres and 43 hospitals with inclusive access to elbow and pedal operated hand washing and safe drinking water stations

While the aim is to reach all 20 districts in the country with handwashing stations, the main challenge faced is resource mobilization, shortage of skilled labour for fabrication of handwashing stations and shipment of raw materials from offshore market due to the COVID-19 restrictions.



United Nations Children's Fund  
Regional Office for South Asia  
P.O. Box 5815  
Lainchaur, Lekhnath Marg  
Kathmandu, Nepal

For more information reach out to ROSA Hand Hygiene focal point:  
Nicole Klaesener-Metzner, [nklaesener@unicef.org](mailto:nklaesener@unicef.org)  
<https://www.unicef.org/rosa/water-sanitation-and-hygiene-wash>