



# Sanitation for Millions – Jordan

INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR ADEQUATE SANITATION AT MOSQUES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

## Background

*Sanitation for Millions* is a multi-donor programme set up in 2016 to contribute to safe and adequate access to sanitation. It considers the entire sanitation chain and applies sustainability criteria to ensure long-lasting results in line with the *Sustainable Development Goals*, in particular SDGs 6, 4 and 3. The programme operates worldwide, focusing notably on the needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups such as children, women and girls, indigenous communities, refugees and internally displaced people as well as persons with disabilities.

*Sanitation for Millions* is mandated by the *Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)* as lead donor and co-financed by the *Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation*, *Water Unite*, the *Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade* and the *Inter-American Development Bank*. The *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH* executes the programme in close cooperation with local partners.

## Sanitation challenges in Jordan

According to official sources, more than 1.4 million refugees have fled to Jordan since the beginning of the Syrian civil war in March 2011. More than 80 percent of them live in host communities, which exacerbates existing challenges such as extreme water scarcity, and further increases the pressure on an already strained infrastructure. Access to functional and hygienically managed public toilets is very limited. Particularly people with disabilities, elderly persons, women, girls and children lack access to adequate sanitation, as the existing infrastructure does not meet their special needs. Recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has underlined the importance of appropriate sanitary and hand-washing facilities as the first line of defence against viral diseases.



Barrier-free toilet at rehabilitated sanitary facility at Salah Eddin Mosque



Impressions from a waitat training

## Intervention of Sanitation for Millions in Jordan

*Sanitation for Millions* initiated its intervention in Jordan in 2017 in the capital city of Amman as well as in Irbid and Mafraq, the regions bordering Syria. The local political partners of the project in Jordan are the *Ministry of Awqaf, Islamic Affairs and Holy Places* and the *Ministry of Water and Irrigation*. Implementation partners include the *Jordanian Association of Boy Scouts and Girl Guides*, the *General Fatwa Department*, Jordanian Universities and the *Bremen Overseas Research and Development Association (BORDA)*. The programme aims at improving access to sanitation along five lines of intervention:

- Construction and rehabilitation of sanitation infrastructure at mosques, paying special attention to the needs of women and disabled persons.
- Operation and maintenance of sanitary facilities through the Facility Management & Maintenance (Hausmeister) concept in mosques.
- Installation of innovative on-site greywater treatment and reuse systems in mosques.
- Mobilization of innovative community champions such as the *Jordanian Association for Boy Scouts and Girls Guides*.
- Raising awareness on sanitation and hygiene through cooperation with religious actors.

Currently, construction and rehabilitation measures are being implemented at mosques with the goal to provide safe and clean toilets for more than 22,700 beneficiaries. To ensure functionality and safety, *Sanitation for Millions* trains institutional staff such as Muezzins and provides them with a toolbox to conduct minor repairs by themselves. Skilled technicians in equipped *Mobile Maintenance Units* established under *Sanitation for Millions* resolve major technical issues in around 450 mosques per year.

The dismissal of water used for ritual washing at holy places into a septic tank or sewage system means a waste of Jordan's scarcest resource. Therefore, greywater treatment and reuse systems using low maintenance sand-filters are constructed and connected to the sanitary facilities, to utilize treated greywater for irrigation of adjacent public parks. With regard to improved hygiene behaviour, Muslim male and female preachers (imams and waithat) work with *Sanitation for Millions* to promote good hygiene practices and cleanliness. Waithat teach women within gender-segregated religious lectures about hygiene practices, including sensitive topics such as menstrual hygiene.

The hygiene guidebook, developed in cooperation with religious leaders and the *General Fatwa Department* (issuing nonbinding legal opinions on Islamic law), constitutes the first manual on water, sanitation and hygiene from an Islamic perspective. Furthermore, the *General Fatwa Department* partnered up with the project in order to discuss hygiene from an Islamic perspective on TV and social media.

## Jordan Highlights 2017-2021

- More than 600 muezzins absolved trainings for plumbing and received toolboxes to conduct light maintenance and repairs at mosques.
- 225 waithat were trained in hygiene workshops and acquired relevant knowledge they pass on to women and girls to ensure hygiene awareness transfer to the household level.
- A mass media campaign on preventive hygiene practices from an Islamic perspective reached more than half a million people.
- An online course on sanitation and hygiene has been developed and rolled out at eight universities which will reach 30 000 students per year.



Muezzin with Toolbox

## Outlook

In the long-run, *Sanitation for Millions* aims to create opportunities for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups by providing access to sanitary facilities and ensuring hygiene and safety in public sanitary infrastructure for all users. Technicians will continue to be trained in the field of advanced plumbing to be able to conduct heavy maintenance and repairs at mosques and to supervise the construction of new sanitary units.

Waithat will be trained to become so-called Hygiene Ambassadors who will teach safe hand hygiene in local communities to prevent the spread of infectious diseases such as COVID-19.

Being the first sanitation programme to work with religious leaders in Jordan, *Sanitation for Millions* intends to expand interventions – also through financial contributions from other donors – to include further institutions and innovative actors such as Christian churches and authorities.

Moreover, *Sanitation for Millions* will construct greywater treatment systems in three mosques, rehabilitate old sanitary units for men, women, and people with disabilities, and conduct capacity building and awareness raising sessions for local communities.

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Registered offices Bonn and Eschborn, Germany  
Sanitation for Millions  
Dr. Bärbel Schwaiger  
T +49 6196 79-2809  
F +49 6196 7990-2809  
E S4M@giz.de

**Authors** Sanitation for Millions

**Layout** creative republic, Frankfurt

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**Division** Division 103 – Water, sanitation, hygiene

**Postal address of BMZ offices**

BMZ Bonn Dahlmannstraße 4 53113 Bonn, Germany T +49 228 99 535-0 F +49 228 99 535-3500	BMZ Berlin Stresemannstraße 94 10963 Berlin, Germany T +49 30 18 535-0 F +49 30 18 535-2501
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[poststelle@bmz.bund.de](mailto:poststelle@bmz.bund.de)  
[www.bmz.de](http://www.bmz.de)