

Working with faith schools to improve  
water, sanitation and hygiene for  
children and communities





**Our vision:** A world in which everyone has life-giving clean water and the dignity of decent sanitation and good hygiene.

**Our mission:** To inspire faith communities to prioritise clean water, safe sanitation and good hygiene in their teachings and practices.

To build partnerships between religious and secular groups working in WASH for lasting community impact.

One of the hand washing points we have installed in Uganda..  
Photograph: Faith in Water

# 2018 in review: Focusing on girls' education

This has been an incredibly busy and exhilarating year for Faith in Water: busy because we have been implementing our Dignity for Girls project in Uganda in February, and exhilarating because it has gone even better than we'd hoped.

The project works with three major faith groups – the Catholic Church, Church of Uganda and the Muslim community – to reduce the rate of girls dropping out of education by helping them feel more confident about managing their periods.

Difficulties in managing their periods have been identified as a significant factor in girls missing school and even dropping out of education altogether in low-income families. Girls who drop out of school are at high risk of child marriage and teenage pregnancy. Currently 24% of girls aged 15-19 have begun child bearing in Uganda.

As well as helping 1,440 girls manage their periods better by establishing 24 schools as centres of excellence on teaching on menstrual hygiene management (MHM), the project is also working to improve attitudes to

Faith in Water is a UK-based charity that works with faith communities to bring clean water, safe sanitation and good hygiene to the world's poorest peoples. We are a secular organisation and work with all the major faiths.

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## Why work with faiths?

- 84% of people worldwide say they belong to a faith.<sup>1</sup>
- Faiths are involved in at least 50% of schools worldwide.<sup>2</sup>
- Faiths also play a major role in informal education through youth groups, madrassas and Sunday schools. For example, Ethiopia has six million young people enrolled in Orthodox church Sunday schools.
- Faiths are trusted as a leading source of wisdom, information and authority in many parts of the world.<sup>3</sup>
- Water and cleanliness have spiritual significance in many faiths, offering opportunities to link practical action to deep-felt beliefs.

References on back page

Continued...

menstruation in the wider faith communities in order to reduce the crippling sense of stigma and shame that so many girls feel. To that end, we are also working with faith leaders and faith-based women's and youth groups

Although MHM has become an increasingly important issue in recent years, this is first initiative to engage Christian and Muslim groups – which are all important providers of education as well as influencers of opinion – on menstrual health.

### Response from faith groups

The response from our faith partners to this project has been very positive. At the workshops we held in May and June for faith leaders and faith education chiefs, all three groups recognised this as a significant issue for girls' education and wellbeing and pledged their support.

We have seen this support manifest itself in all kinds of ways. Two stories indicate the potential impact of working with the faiths: In Jinja, the Catholic Bishop



Children at Mende UMEA Primary School enjoy the water from their new rainwater harvesting tank. Photograph: Faith in Water

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# Our background

Faith in Water developed out of the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC), founded in 1995 by HRH Prince Philip to help the world's religions develop environmental programmes based on their own core teachings, beliefs and practices.

Faith in Water grew out of a six-year ARC project working with faith schools in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2015 it was established as an independent organisation focusing on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in faith schools and communities.

We focus on faith-schools because of the huge role played by the faiths in education and because schools are a gateway into the wider faith community. We work with all the major faiths and are not affiliated to any one faith.

# What we do

- We develop education resources that show how taking action on WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) can be a practical expression of a faith's sacred teachings.
- We deliver WASH training to faith schools and the wider community.
- We develop menstrual health toolkits and training for faith schools to empower girls to manage their menstruation safely and with dignity.
- We help organisations work more effectively with faith groups, to build powerful partnerships for lasting community impact.
- We work with partners to improve WASH facilities in schools and communities.





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took sanitary pads with him on his visits to remote parts of his diocese. "Do you know what these are?" he asked his congregations. "Do you know that you should provide these for your girls?"

In Kampala, women's and youth groups have held meetings on menstruation at the National Mosque. One Muslim woman told us: "Do you have any idea how amazing this was? To discuss this *inside* the mosque? Previously, this would not have been allowed. This was a no go area, you would not sit and discuss this subject in public, and certainly not in the mosque."

### Implementing partners

We are working with A Rocha Uganda, HEAR Uganda, and Energising Solutions to deliver this project as well as Brick by Brick Construction for rainwater harvesting tanks and So Sure for reusable sanitary pads. Funding is from the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Joffe Charitable Trust.

## Launch of Dignity Day, 29 June 2018



Top left: Dignity Day organiser Hajjat Aphwa Kaawaase Sebyala waits outside the National Mosque for the start of the Dignity Day procession. Top centre: His Excellence the Mufti of Uganda. Top right: Handing out slices of the celebratory Dignity Day cake. Bottom left: Women queue for the Dignity Day lunch. Bottom centre: Cooks stir the stew. Bottom right: Hundreds of women and men enjoy the Dignity Day celebratory lunch. Photographs: Faith in Water



# Dignity Day launch

We were very excited to launch Dignity Day as an annual gazetted event in Uganda Muslim Supreme Council's calendar. To be held on the last Friday of every June, Dignity Day is aimed at celebrating girls and women, and raising awareness of menstruation as natural, normal and nothing to be ashamed of.

This year's launch on June 29 at Uganda's National Mosque included a special sermon on the dignity of women and girls, preached to more than 4,300 people. Afterwards His Excellence the Mufti of Uganda officiated at the Dignity Day launch party. His speech urging Muslims to help their wives and daughters manage their periods with dignity was broadcast across Uganda via the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council's radio station.

We believe this annual event will have great impact in breaking the silence on menstruation and reducing stigma in the Muslim community.

**"I feel good! At this time I feel so good!"**



Kitoba Catholic Primary School in Hoima District is one of the schools in the Dignity for Girls programme. After the menstrual and puberty training, 14-year-old Asima Evers (inset above) who is in Primary Six, said:

**"I learned how a girl can manage her menstruation. I learned how to use [reusable] pads and pants, how to wash them, how to dry them. And they told us that menstruation is not a disease but is natural and normal for everyone. I feel good! At this time I feel so good!"**





# Working in schools

Top row, from left: Adrine Musiime of A Rocha Uganda hands over a girls' club grant to Kyalisiima Hellen, head of Kiduuma Primary School, Hoima; The new latrines and hand washing facilities at Karunjanga Primary School, Kabale; Fr Patrick Mugisa addresses pupils at Kateriega School, Jinja.

Middle row, from left: A pupil at Kihanda Primary School, Kinkiizi, uses the new hand washing facility; Girls at Huddah Islamic Wanyange Primary School, Jinja. Bright blue handprints and footprints guide pupils to their new hand washing facility at Nakashure Primary School, Kinkiizi.

Bottom row, from left: A Kyebondo Primary School pupil shows off the reusable sanitary pads she is making. Washing hands at Nakashure Primary School, Kinkiizi. Playing Snakes & Ladders Period Game at Kihanda Primary School, Kinkiizi.

We provided puberty and menstruation training to 1,290 girls this year, including packs of reusable sanitary pads, knickers and soap, and also trained 203 teachers and local faith leaders and 688 parents.

We improved toilet facilities in 22 schools, mostly in rural areas but also in deprived urban and peri-urban areas. This included installing hand washing facilities in all of them and carrying out repairs such as replacing missing doors, adding hooks, mending broken walls. Rainwater tanks were constructed in nine schools and girls' changing rooms in ten schools.

We set up girls' clubs and developed a fun Snakes & Ladders period game. All of the 18 DFID-funded schools also received a sewing machine and fabric so that pupils could learn to make reusable sanitary pads for themselves.

The pupils all loved the practical lessons. In several schools, boys asked to join the classes. Asked why he wanted to learn to make pads, Kasana UMEA Year Six pupil Ssekyanzi Yunus, 13, (right), said: "I need to know about these things because one day I will be a father."



Girls and boys learn to make reusable pads at Kyaliwajjala and Mende Primary Schools.



# Working with faith communities

Three faith-based scout groups – the National Uganda Union of Muslim Scouts (NUUMS), Uganda Catholic Scouts Fraternity, and Anglican Scouts – have joined the Dignity for Girls programme to raise awareness and tackle stigma on menstruation.

More than 500 scouts attended the launch of the partnership with NUUMS in June at Kazo Mixed Primary School, Wakiso, and another 1,000 scouts attended a Dignity for Girls celebration in August at Kibuli Secondary School, Makindye, Kampala.

More than 180 scouts attended an MHM training programme at the National Scouts campsite in Kaazi, while 117 scouts took part in a conference for Catholic scouts and scout leaders in November. Bishop Paul Ssemogerere (pictured left), chair of the Lay Apostolate Commission, urged all Catholic scout groups to promote good MHM.





# Working with Muslim women's groups



The Uganda Muslim Women Association (UMWA) held a very successful awareness raising meeting on MHM at the National Mosque on October 16 for 116 participants, including eight men and 19 Muslim women leaders visiting from Zanzibar, Tanzania. Photographs: UMWA

More than 160 people attended Uganda Muslim Women Vision meeting in Wakiso on October 5. They included 90 women, 26 men and 44 students. Afterwards, 91% said their knowledge had increased a lot and 87% said their attitude to MHM had improved. Photographs: UMWV

**'For I was hungry and you  
gave me something to eat,  
I was thirsty and you gave  
me something to drink.'**

– Matthew 25:35 (Christianity)

**'Surely Allah loves those  
who turn much (to Him),  
and He loves those who  
purify themselves.'**

– Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayah 222 (Islam)

**'O son of Kunti, I am the taste  
of water, the light of the sun  
and the moon, the syllable  
'om' in the Vedic mantras.'**

– Japji Bhagavad Gita 7:8 (Hinduism)

**'Air is the Guru, Water the  
Father and Earth is the  
Great Mother of all.'**

– Japji Sahib (Sikhism)

## Our values

**Respect:** We work with all the major faiths and respect and value the worth and dignity of all people.

**People-led:** We respond to people's own needs and priorities.

**Sustainable:** Our initiatives must meet the needs identified for as long as those needs exist and should be community-led, low cost and practical.

**Integrity:** We will act with integrity and professionalism at all times.

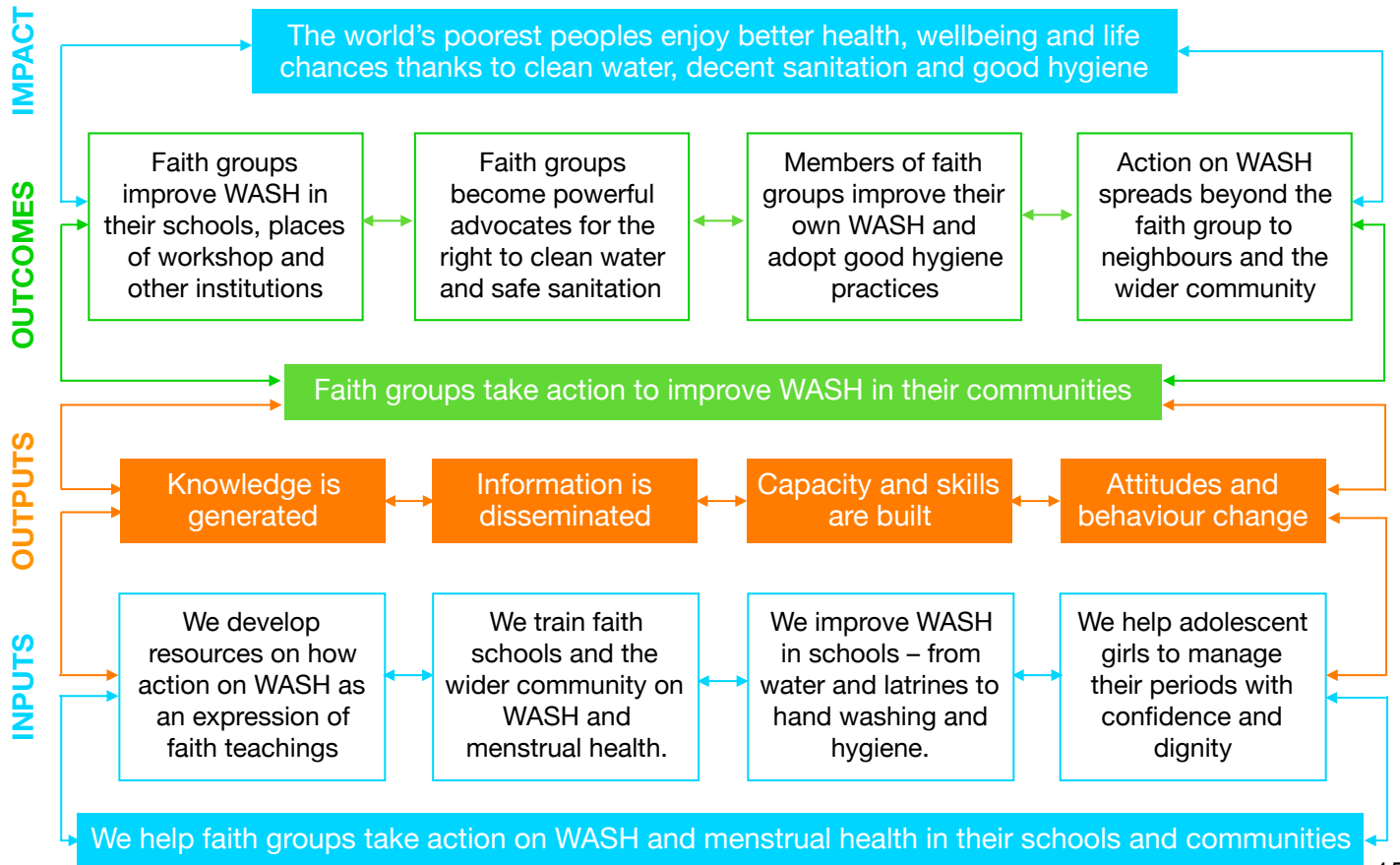
**Justice:** We believe in equity, justice and a fair share in global resources for all.

**Collaboration:** We seek to work in partnership with others so that we may be more effective.

**Sharing:** We aim to learn from our partners and share what we've learned so that we may support the world's poorest peoples in their efforts to improve their lives.



# How Faith in Water works





National Union of Uganda Muslim Scouts gathering, June 2018

Credits from page 4:  
<sup>1</sup> Pew Forum (2012),  
 The Global Religious  
 Landscape  
<sup>2</sup> USAID (2013)  
 Faith, Water and  
 Development  
<sup>3</sup> BBC (2005) World  
 Service/Gallup  
 International Poll:  
 Who Runs Your  
 World



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