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Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Health Centers in Tajikistan

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for every child



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Inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene infrastructures in maternity and newborn departments of health facilities are among the leading factors behind high neonatal and infant mortality in Tajikistan. UNICEF is committed to ensure that all health care facilities have access to safely managed drinking water and sanitation facilities.

The situation

The water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure in Tajikistan continues to be in a poor state^{1 2} - including in most health facilities. There, the shortfall in WASH facilities does not only discourage pregnant women from seeking care and utilize health services, but also hinders effective infection control and hygiene practices by mothers of newborn babies and their caregivers.

In 2017, out of the 73 maternities, where more than 80 per cent of deliveries of newborns take place in Tajikistan, 65 (89 per cent) did not meet the required WASH standards – thus posing potentially life-threatening risks to mothers and their new-born babies who use the facilities.

How UNICEF helps

Thanks to the support of the Swiss City Marathon Lucerne and MSD, by 2020, UNICEF and partners³ could rehabilitate the WASH infrastructure in 18 selected maternity departments and one children's hospital. The scope of the rehabilitation works in selected health facilities included the construction of new toilets, a water supply system, an electric system for toilets, and of cesspools for the disposal of wastewater.

Through this intervention, UNICEF and partners could reduce the number of maternity departments in need of improved access to adequate WASH infrastructure to a total of 47 (66 percent).

Approximately 64 521 women and their newborns, 3 820 children and 1 312 health care workers benefit from this improvement of quality of maternal, neonatal and child health care in Tajikistan.

We would like to thank the Swiss City Marathon Lucerne and MSD for supporting this important programme with their generous contribution from the Marathon 2019, thereby helping us to protect children.

¹ The water contains high levels of coliform bacteria and has low palatability. Most of the drinking water supply infrastructure is based on agricultural canals, which were constructed during Soviet times, now in a dilapidated state. Open defecation in Tajikistan has reduced significantly, however most of the households use basic pit latrines, which are situated away from housing units, and can be a source contamination.

² Please visit: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tajikistan/publication/poverty-diagnostic-drinking-water-sanitation-and-hygiene-conditions-in-tajikistan> for more information.

³ The Ministry of Health and Social Protection and the Committee for Construction and Architecture