



## CORONAVIRUS CRISIS: SOAP AND WATER

**CARE provides facilities, supplies and awareness for prevention.**

“Wash your hands!” is among the universal advice being given worldwide to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19. **But what if you have no way of washing your hands?** No soap, no clean water – no basic knowledge of how to protect yourself?

**3 billion people worldwide lack basic handwashing facilities.<sup>1</sup>**

**Refugees and migrants** in crowded camps and settlements are at particular risk. A CARE study of displaced-persons camps in northwestern Syria, in March 2020, found that as many as **83% of sites have no access to handwashing facilities, 91% lack soap, and 45% do not have enough water** to meet basic needs.

**CARE’s teams are moving quickly** to provide access to safe water, handwashing facilities, soap, cleaning supplies, and hygiene and prevention information **in 23 countries** – as part of an organization-wide effort to address the pandemic.

**CARE has decades of experience** addressing these shortfalls, in many of the 100 countries where we work. For most of our 75-year history, support for **water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)** has been a primary focus area – both in our long-term development work and in the aftermath of natural disasters, when the threat of disease can rise dramatically.



Access to safe water and handwashing facilities is one of the crucial ways CARE is helping vulnerable people protect themselves from infection.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/18-06-2019-1-in-3-people-globally-do-not-have-access-to-safe-drinking-water-unicf-who>



CARE's promotion of handwashing has been highly effective in places like Yemen, site of the largest cholera outbreak in recorded history.

### It's not just about installing sinks.

Beyond providing facilities, soap and water, CARE focuses **on hygiene promotion**. During epidemics like cholera, Ebola, and Zika, our **community awareness initiatives** have successfully increased handwashing and other good hygiene practices. Our outreach includes **volunteer door-to-door campaigns, local prevention committees, posters, flyers, radio broadcasts, telephone hotlines** and more.

**Evidence shows the effectiveness** of CARE'S approaches. To cite one example, families in Yemen reached by CARE'S Emergency Assistance for Vulnerable and Conflict-Affected Communities project were 2.6 times more likely to wash their hands. Those reached by our Emergency Ebola Response project in Sierra Leone was 30% more likely to wash their hands.

### Some examples of CARE'S water, sanitation and hygiene initiatives in response to COVID-19:

- In **Guatemala**, providing hygiene training to high-priority families and launching a major media and promotional campaign in coordination with the Guatemalan government, reaching a total of 300,000 people.
- In **Haiti**, providing prevention information to 30,000 people; distributing hygiene kits to extremely poor households, elderly and disabled people; and setting up handwashing stations and water supply.
- In **Ethiopia**, establishing handwashing stations, supplying soap and detergent to 10,000 people.
- In **Myanmar**, targeting 200,000 people with information, education, handwashing and sanitation items.
- In the **West Bank and Gaza**, providing awareness-raising campaigns for 100,000 people.

Our **outreach to refugees and migrants** includes:

- In **Jordan**, distributing hygiene kits and providing technical assistance in water and sanitation in the Azraq camp, home to more than 35,000 Syrian refugees.
- In **Nigeria**, providing handwashing stations, supplies and promoting safe hygiene practices in congested camps occupied by families who have fled insurgency.
- In **Uganda**, helping Congolese and South Sudanese refugees, as well as host communities, protect themselves from COVID-19 by providing handwashing soap, educational materials and broadcasts.
- In **Bangladesh**, promoting handwashing and other preparedness measures among displaced families from Myanmar in Cox's Bazar – the world's largest refugee settlement.

As in all our work, CARE pays special attention to **the unique needs of women and girls**. For example, in refugee camp settings, **women need protection** when walking to distant water sources, or when using facilities late at night. Another group that needs special consideration is **adolescent girls**, who can risk dropping out of school because they lack appropriate facilities to tend to menstrual hygiene.

**As we have for 75 years**, CARE is working in some of the world's most isolated places, with deeply vulnerable people who face an unprecedented crisis. We remain convinced that our society will face this test by reaffirming our shared humanity and commitment to one another.

**Please join us in this effort: [care.org/COVIDupdates](https://www.care.org/COVIDupdates)**