



# Closing the financing gap to bring safe water and sanitation to all

Water.org 2024–2026 strategic plan



Updated June 2024



## THE PROBLEM:

# Solving the global water and sanitation crisis requires more funding

**The global water and sanitation crisis affects billions of people.** Today, 2.2 billion people — 1 in 4 — lack access to safe water and 3.5 billion people — 2 in 5 — lack access to a safe toilet.



**People in poverty — especially women and girls — feel the impacts of these crises first and worst.** Women are disproportionately affected by the water crisis, as they are often responsible for collecting water for their families. Women and girls spend 200 million hours every day collecting water. This takes time away from work, school, and caring for family.



**Water is the primary way in which we will feel many of the effects of climate change.** Climate threats — like the more frequent extreme weather events we've been seeing — affect the water systems we all rely on. Millions of families in poverty live in regions where water access is limited, temporary, or unstable. They are less prepared to face the effects of climate change like temperature extremes, floods, and droughts.



**The global water crisis is a health crisis.** More than 1 million people die each year from lack of access to safe water and sanitation, and every 2 minutes a child dies from a water-related disease. Access to safe water and sanitation at home improves health and helps families protect themselves from illness and disease.



**Access to safe water gives kids the time and health for school.** Children are often responsible for collecting water for their families. This takes time away from school and play. Reductions in time spent collecting water increases school attendance, especially for girls. Access to safe water gives children the opportunity for a bright future.



**Time spent gathering water or seeking safe sanitation accounts for billions in lost economic opportunities.** \$260 billion is lost globally each year due to lack of basic water and sanitation. Access to safe water and sanitation at home turns time spent into time saved, giving families more time to pursue education and work opportunities that will help them break the cycle of poverty.

Water is the best investment the world can make to fight climate change, achieve gender equality, improve health and education, and break the cycle of poverty. Billions of people live without safely managed water and sanitation services around the world. With global threats profoundly affecting our economies, societies and environment, access to safe water and sanitation is fundamental to solving the world's most urgent global challenges.



**People living in poverty need long-term solutions.**

One of the major barriers to safe water and sanitation is access to affordable financing. When people are living without these basic services, they have to pay for them – and they pay a lot more than we do, sometimes more than 20% of their income. They also pay with their time, health, and money for temporary solutions.

**There's a gap in financing.** According to The World Bank Group, \$114 billion per year, starting in 2016, is needed to achieve safely managed water and sanitation for all by 2030, meeting Sustainable Development Goal 6. Current investments for water and sanitation amount to \$28.4 billion per year. This represents a gap of \$85.6 billion.

Further, there is simply a shortage of quality, investible opportunities that impact people living at the base of the economic pyramid, and philanthropy can help play a critical role in connecting the dots.



**Solutions – like ours – are needed to fill the gap in financing for universal access to water and sanitation.**

New sources of finance are critical to achieve universal access to safe water and sanitation. A radical increase in global financing is required, 3x the current annual investment. Bridging the financing gap and delivering safe and affordable access to water and sanitation will depend on smart and efficient approaches. Solutions that strategically use donor funds to attract private investment can fill in the financing gap. That's where Water.org comes in.

We use philanthropy to expedite and catalyze new investable pathways to solve issues at scale and bring in investment capital to solve these issues. Trust-based philanthropy is what has made this work possible – allowing us to innovate, test, fail, and get to where we are now. Philanthropic capital is key to bringing in more investment capital to solve the crisis, and investment capital is key to matching the scale of the solution to the scale of the problem.





## THE SOLUTION:

### Unlocking philanthropic and investment capital to solve the global water crisis

Water.org is a global nonprofit organization that helps remove the financial barriers between people living in poverty and access to the safe water and sanitation solutions they need to survive and thrive.

Water.org has reached more than 66 million people with safe water or sanitation to date through our impact solutions like WaterCredit. WaterCredit helps bring small loans to those who need access to affordable financing. Our expertise and partnerships have helped millions finance water taps, toilets, and other household facilities.

Our unique solutions are market-driven and adapted to the countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America where we work. With more than 30 years of experience and insight, and in collaboration with our partners, we are developing more efficient, scalable solutions and using financing to help people living in poverty get access to safe water and sanitation.



As we look to the future, our aspirational goal is to cumulatively unlock the flow of \$20 billion in capital to reach more than 200 million people with safe water or sanitation by 2030.

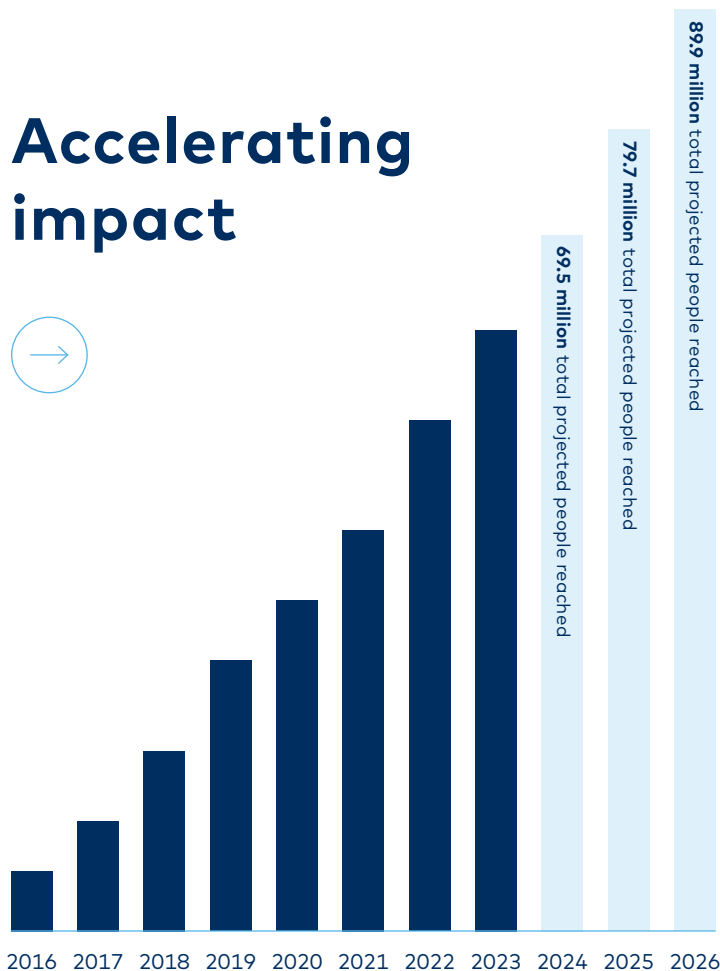
## 200 million

*Water.org aspires to change 200 million lives with access to safe water or sanitation by 2030.*

## \$20 billion

*Water.org aspires to mobilize \$20 billion in capital for safe water and sanitation by 2030.*

# Accelerating impact



Just a few years ago, we reached about one million people in a year. Now we can reach that many people every six weeks. In the coming three years, we seek to empower an additional 29.9 million people, ensuring access to safe water that can turn problems into potential — unlocking education, economic opportunity, and improved health.

**Projected people reached**

**Projected capital mobilized**

**9.5 million**

**\$775 million**

*in 2024*

*in 2024*

**10.2 million**

**\$819 million**

*in 2025*

*in 2025*

**10.2 million**

**\$819 million**

*in 2026*

*in 2026*



**OUR VISION:**

Safe water and sanitation for all

**WHO WE ARE:**

A results-driven team of thinkers and doers

**WHAT WE DO:**

We break down the financial barriers between people and access to safe water and sanitation.

**WHY IT MATTERS:**

Because everyone deserves the opportunity to define their own future. We believe in the power of water — for people, for progress, and for possibility.

We're focusing on three key impact strategies to continue to scale our work and unlock the flow of capital for water and sanitation. Water.org will deploy revenue, operations, and talent initiatives to support our impact goals.

We will continue to scale WaterCredit — our proven, powerful solution that has already changed more than 66 million lives with safe water or sanitation — while investing in new solutions to expand water and sanitation infrastructure and enable climate resiliency for people living in poverty around the world. These three impact strategies will help us change 200 million lives with access to safe water or sanitation by 2030.

## IMPACT

1

**Scale and diversify financial partnerships** — *Expand and scale WaterCredit among financial institutions and connect them with capital to scale impact of our proven, powerful solution.*

2

**Expand water and sanitation infrastructure solutions** — *Facilitate investments from capital providers into water and sanitation enterprises and projects with utility partners to reach even more people in need of climate-resilient safe water and sanitation solutions.*

3

**Pursue climate and gender impact** — *Prioritize monitoring the impact of our work related to improving gender equity and climate resiliency, creating new performance metrics to help ensure the effectiveness of our strategies and intentionally integrating climate and gender into our work.*

## REVENUE AND PARTNERSHIP

**Increase flexible funding** — *Increase unrestricted and flexible funding and integrate offerings with WaterEquity to ensure the most effective and strategic use of our financial resources, build mutually accountable philanthropic relationships, and reach more people with safe water and sanitation.*

**Work as a social enterprise** — *Partner with WaterEquity and WaterConnect to advance strategic and operational integration, increasing our shared impact and enabling even greater organizational scale and sustainability.*

## TALENT AND OPERATIONS

**Achieve effective and efficient operations** — *Enhance productivity and enable efficiency by building systems, policies, and processes that result in decreased administrative costs, and ultimately lead to more meaningful work, sustainable growth, and scalable impact.*

**Foster a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment** — *Attract, develop, and retain the right talent, build expertise, promote gender and racial diversity in leadership roles, and increase opportunities for global staff to increase employee satisfaction (and decrease turnover) and enable a more supportive and inclusive workplace.*



## JOIN US

This strategy will expand the flow of capital into the water and sanitation sector to impact those most vulnerable, thus addressing the most significant barrier to achieving universal access to water and sanitation. This changes how the world tackles the water crisis and changes the world for those in need of water and sanitation.

As we look to the future, we are optimistic about the transformational change we can make against the world's most urgent challenges in 2024 and beyond. The global water and sanitation crisis is solvable. The technology exists, and we just need to connect people to the resources they need. Together, we will achieve our vision of safe water and sanitation for all by continuing to unlock more funding and remove the financial barriers that stand between people in need and lasting access to safe water and sanitation — driving economic growth, supporting healthy communities and ecosystems, enhancing resilience to climate change, and promoting gender equity.



---

*This impact is only possible in collaboration with others. Our partners play a significant role in making it possible for us to do more. Together, we will continue to drive long-term change at scale that will help us achieve safe water and sanitation for all.*

---

Water.org is an international nonprofit organization that has positively transformed more than 66 million lives around the world with access to safe water and sanitation. Founded by Gary White and Matt Damon, Water.org pioneers market-driven financial solutions to the global water crisis. For more than 30 years, we've been providing women hope, children health, and families a future.

Learn more at <https://water.org>

