



WASH FIT Workshop, Yangon, August 2019 | © Terre des hommes

Myanmar

Piloting WASH FIT in Health Care Facilities in Hlaing Thayar Township, Yangon Region

How to start WASH in HCF projects on the right foot?

Support health systems with approaches for communities to assess their own facilities and formulate improvement plans *before* investing in infrastructure and equipment.

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1. Introduction

The Water and Sanitation for Health Facility Improvement Tool ([WASH FIT](#) - WHO, UNICEF 2018) is new to Myanmar. In cooperation with national and local authorities, Tdh has introduced WASH FIT as a methodology for elevating WASH services to a “basic” level as part of its WASH in Health Care Facilities (HCF) project in Hlaing Thayar, Yangon Region’s largest and fastest growing township.

A participative process for continuous quality improvement of WASH services is essential in order to accompany HCF stakeholders in achieving “Basic” service levels¹ for water, sanitation, hygiene, medical waste management and environmental cleaning. WASH FIT is a risk-based approach for improving and sustaining WASH services in HCF. WASH FIT guides multisectoral teams through a continuous cycle of assessing and prioritizing risks, defining and implementing improvements, and continually monitoring progress.

2. National Level Contextualization of WASH FIT

In the summer of 2019, at the debut of a 30-month project supported by Gebauer Foundation and the Swiss Water & Sanitation Consortium, Tdh shared WASH FIT documentation with the Director of WASH Department, Ministry of Health and Sport (MOHS) in Naypyidaw. Tdh proposed collaboration on WASH FIT in seven HCF in Hlaing Thayar, starting with a workshop to orient stakeholders on the process and indicators and to contextualize WASH FIT for Myanmar. The Director sent the Yangon Regional Health Department Assistant Director to the workshop on 27th August 2019 in Yangon. He was joined by senior personnel from the Yangon City Development Council (YCDC), the township health department and the seven HCF.

Prior to the workshop, Tdh held preliminary meetings with township health department and YCDC introducing a translated version of WASH FIT (including sanitary risk assessment forms). During the workshop, government health officials, the township medical officer and HCF personnel agreed on indicators relevant for the country’s Primary Health Centers. Participants chose 12 indicators in the Water domain, 18 in the Sanitation domain, 14 in the Hygiene domain and 10 indicators for Management. They expressed appreciation for the orientation on WASH FIT and their interest to implement this new tool at the Township level, and eventually at the national level. The draft document was translated into Burmese and approved by the Hlaing Thayar Township Health Department, and subsequently by the Director of the WASH Department, MOHS.

3. Implementation

Representatives from the HCF Management Committees (e.g. ward authorities and HCF personnel) established WASH FIT teams in each HCF to lead the process. Team members include community elders, retired HCF personnel, health volunteers and Mother Support Group members. The project facilitated the training of WASH FIT teams, learning about national WASH standards, participative assessments, and preparation of Improvement Plans in all seven HCF of Hlaing Thayar Township:

- 2 Urban Health Centers (Primary & Secondary Urban Health Center)
- 1 Rural Health Center (Yay Oak Kan)
- 4 Sub Rural Health Centers (Kalargyisu SRHC, Nyaung Ywar SRHC, Shwe Lin Pan SRHC and 18 SRHC)

¹ Recommended indicators by WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply & Sanitation (JMP, 2018)



Improvement plans led Management Committees of three HCF to establish WASH maintenance funds ranging between USD 75 – 150. WASH FIT teams also organised maintenance and minor repairs of basins and pipelines, and succeeded to improve services as in Table 1:

BASELINE SURVEY (HTY)								
	WATER		SANITATION		HAND HYGIENE		WASTE MANAGEMENT	
Basic	7	100%	0	0%	3	43%	0	0%
Limited	0	0%	6	86%	2	29%	4	57%
No service	0	0%	1	14%	2	29%	3	43%

MIDLINE SURVEY (HTY)								
	WATER		SANITATION		HAND HYGIENE		WASTE MANAGEMENT	
Basic	7	100%	1	14%	6	86%	3	43%
Limited	0	0%	6	86%	1	14%	4	57%
No service	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Table 1. Comparison of JMP service levels from baseline (SEP 2019) and midline (MAR 2020) surveys: improvements in sanitation, hand hygiene and waste management (environmental cleaning data collected from 2020) - WASH in Institutions Facility Evaluation Tool ([FACET](#), Eawag, Tdh)

3. Learning Journey

Insights from Tdh Myanmar's learning during the initial six months of the project include:

WASH FIT influences HCF Management Committee members to make improvements

Although the WASH Fit teams have different levels of self-organisation and proactivity, all began intervention shortly after producing Improvement Plans. WASH FIT teams influenced Management Committees to take measures to:

- Start modest improvement works (renovating a drainage system and hand hygiene stations, and cleaning around the HCF);
- Negotiate modest donations from Ward Commissions for use as an annual WASH budget.

WASH in HCF is a new topic for many HCF Management Committees and local authorities

Include orientation on infection prevention & control, the WASH FIT process and contextualized indicators. Time invested in stakeholder understanding WASH FIT processes is paramount.

While technical expertise is important, WASH FIT requires skills in community mobilization

Plan time and resources to train local authorities/ partners on *facilitation techniques*. An expert in community mobilization should coach the process—s/he need not have a WASH background.

Consult with stakeholders for consensus on frequency and duration of WASH FIT meetings

Initially Tdh planned monthly WASH FIT team meetings for 3-4 hours. However, 60 – 90-minute slots were arranged to suit the limited availability of committee members and township health officials.

Monitor signs that WASH FIT team and HCF Management Committee are becoming risk aware

After the first WASH FIT exercise, community members and HCF personnel demonstrated risk awareness (e.g. citing inadequate space between toilets and tube wells to the team).

Tdh Myanmar expresses sincere gratitude for the participation and valuable input of the WASH Department - Ministry of Health and Sport, the Yangon City Development Council, the Hlaing Thayar Township Health Department and Township Medical Officer, and the HCF staff and WASH Committee Members.