

PALLABI SLUM, BANGLADESH

Urban community needs water supply, sanitation

Current Situation in Pallabi Slum: In the urban slum of Pallabi, the people struggle to meet their daily water needs. They retrieve water from illegal connections to the city's water supply, often paying up to 10 times the price of the water sold to legal connections. Other community members obtain all their drinking water from construction sites, mosques, or from contaminated drainage ditches. Children of Pallabi frequently suffer from diarrheal diseases.

Eighty-nine of every 1,000 Bangladeshi children die before the age of 5.

The Solution: The people of Pallabi are prepared to pay 100% of the capital costs and 100% of the maintenance costs for a new water system, but they lack the access to credit to get started. With financial support from WaterPartners International, our Bangladeshi partner organization will work with the people of Pallabi to improve the health status of these urban slum dwellers by legalizing safe access to drinking water supplies, providing sanitation services, and providing health/hygiene promotion and training. WaterPartners began funding work in this large slum in 2003, and we are continuing to expand the system to provide water and sanitation services to the entire population of Pallabi Slum by 2006.

Proposed new water system description: An underground water reservoir with connection to Dhaka



Kids bathing and enjoying their new water source at Settlement Press Water Point, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Water and Sewerage Authority water mains. Hand pumps will bring water from the underground reservoir to the surface.

Proposed sanitation facilities: The people of Pallabi can choose to install individual household pit latrines or community sanitation blocks. The sanitation blocks consist of a concrete enclosure with two sides (male and female) with four to five pit latrines per side and a septic tank. A water point would also be constructed to supply water to the sanitation block only.

Solid waste management: A house-to-house waste collection system will be established.

Project implementation schedule: Project will take approximately 1-1/2 years to complete.

Goals of the Pallabi Slum water project:

- Eliminate hours of labor by women and children who collect water every day;
- Ensure that residents use improved hygiene practices;
- Provide enough safe water to meet every resident's personal needs for drinking, cooking and washing;
- Ensure that every household has access to a latrine



Pallabi Slum is situated in the Mirpur area of Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh.

The water crisis in Dhaka

Dhaka, one of the primary urban centers of Bangladesh, has been experiencing a rapid increase in population over the past two decades. People are migrating to Dhaka by the thousands in search of employment. Most migrants obtain marginal employment at very low wages and live in squatter and slum settlements with few basic services. Recent studies estimate that 2 million people live in the urban slums of Dhaka. This problem is only expected to worsen—by 2020, the number of people living in urban slums in Dhaka is expected to rise to 9 million.

In these settlements, the poor must buy water of unknown quality at exorbitant rates from alternate service providers. The alternate service providers are mostly “mastans” who have expropriated public hydrants or established illegal water points. Some office and factory staff secretly provide water to the poor. The urban poor also purchase water from private residences or obtain water in exchange for labor.

