If 2022 has demonstrated anything so far, it's that we’re living in a new normal. The last two years were challenging in ways not seen in generations. And now, it doesn't seem like times are any easier, but just that we’ve all grown tougher. For some people, that toughness has turned them inward, worrying about themselves and those around them. But you, our partners, never forgot about the greater good all around the world.

Through whatever hardship you may have faced, you never forgot about people in the world who live in conditions that are more challenging than most people can imagine. You never lost your sense of fellowship with them. You never put your feelings for them aside to focus only on yourself. And for that, thank you.

Thank you for continuing to partner with us, for helping us move our mission forward through these challenging times. You’ve had to reimagine how to fundraise, volunteer and advocate. And you came through, for us and for our friends around the world. Every partnership, all together, reached the Philippines, Cambodia, India, Nepal, Malawi, DR Congo, Zambia, Bolivia, Nicaragua, and Haiti – essentially, every corner of the globe.

SUCCESSFUL SANITATION

One major effort we’ve focused on is improved sanitation. Research shows that improved sanitation reduces the occurrence of typhoid, cholera, trachoma, diarrhea and other potentially fatal illnesses. It’s also important to understand that the definition of health, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) is “more than just the absence of disease.” More studies need to be conducted to discover the exact extent that poor sanitation has on individual safety and security, violence against women, and feelings of disgust and shame, especially for women and girls. Your partnership allowed us to focus on this issue and make a difference in many countries.

HYGIENE, PRIVACY, DIGNITY

The Philippines were one of the countries where some of our greatest success occurred on this project in 2021. A single community-based organization (CBO) in San Isidro built 44 latrines, which are currently in use, to the benefit of 420 people. One CBO member shared some of those benefits, saying, “(participants are) more encouraged to take a bath compared to before.” Another said, “since the surroundings are clean... it is proper to teach the children to be clean.” And clean children are more likely to be healthy children. A total of 476 latrines were installed by several CBOs from 2011 and 2020, benefitting over 3,000 people.
Nicaragua has worked to overcome this issue using composting latrines. These sit on top of the soil, rather than need a hole to be dug, because the ground is typically rocky and difficult to dig into. Four communities built 118 composting latrines from 2010 to 2020, and their impact is still being felt today. One participant recently shared, “It is very helpful for me to have this composting latrine because we have a cleaner environment and hygiene. Also it's been helpful for the family and the people in the house because 8 to 10 months later we can use the fertilizer we produce in it.”

India communities placed latrines in individual homes, including a bathing area. Here, they’re using pour flush technology. The bathing floor slopes just enough to steer wastewater into a pipe. And, the toilets flush by manually pouring water into the bowl, where it then flows to a soakaway pit. In the communities of Kurumpeta and Kuljing, the CBOs built 271 latrines between 2011 and 2020. Also, because the projects were planned by the communities themselves, they knew to prioritize a bathing area. One participant shared, “because of the sanitation the village surrounding is clean and is a healthy environment for the people.” It’s the Outreach process at its best!

These latrine projects facilitated by our project partners are indeed unique. They’re prioritized and planned by the communities themselves. This means each community gets the exact type of latrine they prefer, from Nicaragua’s compost to India’s bathing space, which reflects the driving principle of community-led development: **Solutions are achieved by the people affected by the problem.**

And as important as health and sanitation are to these and all communities, these latrines provide so much more. Those who use them become educated in how to clean and maintain them, and schedule timely waste removal. They live in pleasant-smelling surroundings. They become willing to invite guests into their homes because they can provide a bathroom. They gain all this, and the dignity that comes with it.

This is just one broad example of project success. What an amazing difference your partnership makes.