



WOMEN AND WATER ALLIANCE



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Gap Inc.



INSTITUTE FOR
**Sustainable
Communities**

OVERVIEW

Access to clean water is essential for community health and well-being, yet in India more than half the population faces high to extremely high water stress. India is in the midst of a growing water crisis exacerbated by mismanagement and unsustainable use of water and the Indian apparel industry — one of the largest and most intensive users of water — has a critical role to play as a steward for this resource.

Spearheaded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Gap Inc., a global apparel retailer that sources products from about 800 facilities in 30 countries, the Women+Water Alliance (W+W Alliance) is a public-private partnership that aims to improve the health and well-being of women and communities touched by the apparel value chain. The W+W Alliance focuses on changing how water is managed sustainably, as a shared, public resource across the apparel value chain – from communities in cotton growing regions to those surrounding fabric mill producers and garment factories.

The W+W Alliance will unlock the potential of women in communities touched by the global apparel industry by bringing together civil society, private sector, government, and USAID to leverage expertise, resources and innovative approaches to address water challenges in India.

ISC joins CARE, Water.org, the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) and Institute for Development Impact (IDI) as an implementing partner in this critical work.

AREAS OF IMPACT

- Water Stewardship
- Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Access
- Gender Equality





ABOUT ISC

The Institute for Sustainable Communities' mission is to help communities around the world address environmental, economic and social challenges by deploying expert advice and encouraging local, multi-sectoral partnerships to build a better future shaped and shared by all. Since our founding in 1991 by former Vermont Governor Madeleine M. Kunin and George Hamilton, ISC has led transformative community-driven projects in 30 countries including the United States, China, India and Bangladesh.

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CONNECTING BUSINESS TO COMMUNITY

The W+W Alliance is a unique public-private partnership model where one of the largest global apparel retailers is working with USAID and other partners to bring about change in water stewardship practices along its value chain. In the W+W Alliance, Gap Inc.'s globally-tested P.A.C.E. program is being used to enhance the knowledge, life skills and capacities of women to champion water, sanitation, and hygiene. The W+W Alliance sets the stage for a new way of collaboration, one that promotes adopting water stewardship practices in a holistic manner by engaging and connecting businesses with the community, government, and NGOs. The W+W Alliance is finding new ways that enable the industry to better understand and mitigate the adverse impact they have on water and the surrounding communities as well as collaborate with external stakeholders – across the value chain – to drive collective action on effective water management practices.

ISC'S ROLE

With an initial focus on India's Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh textile communities, ISC is identifying how businesses and their surrounding textile and cotton growing communities can collaborate to mitigate water risk and have a long-term impact on the effective management of water resources for shared use.

To do this, ISC is:

- Curating best practices, tools and guidelines in water stewardship and pollution abatement in the apparel industry.
- Piloting new approaches to water stewardship through key stakeholders that encourage collaboration and maximize uptake of best practices.
- Disseminating what is learned through national platforms and knowledge-sharing sessions for greater awareness and accelerated adoption of these practices.

When businesses take a water stewardship approach, they themselves capture the benefits from increased water quality and availability, and also help surrounding communities, local economies, and the global supply chain to mitigate the impacts of water-related shocks and stressors.

