

## Call for proposals- Research support on Sanitation Workers: for Doctoral and Master's students

The [Initiative for Sanitation Workers \(ISW\)](#), a global advocacy partnership between ILO, WHO, World Bank, WaterAid and SNV, is happy to announce support for research on sanitation workers.

Sanitation workers – including pit emptiers, sewer workers, and others involved in faecal waste management – provide an essential public service but at the cost of their dignity, safety, health, and living conditions. Often invisible, unquantified, and ostracized, they are exposed to serious health and safety hazards risking illness, injury, or even death. Sanitation workers deserve greater recognition and attention, and policy and regulatory reforms aimed at safeguarding their rights, as highlighted in the 2019 assessment on the [Health, Safety and Dignity of Sanitation Workers](#) by WHO, ILO, World Bank and WaterAid.

We invite proposals from Master's and Doctoral students for research on sanitation workers\* as part of their thesis work, including but not limited to the following themes:

- Occupational health and safety: access to PPE and its use, safety protocol, mechanisation, COVID risk;
- Labor rights, wages, working conditions, access to social security; institutional arrangements (contracting modes and management);
- Sustainable livelihoods, rehabilitation, business models;
- Social challenges and root causes of marginalization- caste/ethnic identity, social discrimination, exclusion; empowerment and mobilization of workers;
- Gender dimensions, disparities, intersectionality;
- Legal frameworks, policies, regulations, standard operating procedures; and their enforcement;
- Interventions to support sanitation workers- good practices and learnings.

*\*For the purpose of this announcement, 'sanitation workers' include different categories of workers directly involved in the management of faecal waste along the sanitation service chain.*

**Eligibility:** This call is open to students based in low or lower-middle income countries<sup>1</sup>, or belonging to these countries. Female and transgender students are encouraged to apply.

### Research support offered:

The support offered to selected students includes:

- **Monetary support to cover research costs:** up to US\$2,000 and up to US\$6,000 each for Master's and Doctoral students respectively. This can include research costs such as: accessing data/publications, interpreters, travel, meetings, communication, stationery, equipment, etc. However, the monetary support would not entail any stipend/scholarship for the students themselves.

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<sup>1</sup> as listed in the UN World Economic Situation and Prospects, 2020  
[https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/WESP2020\\_Annex.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/WESP2020_Annex.pdf)

- **Thematic mentorship support:** As a complement to the existing supervisory support available to the students from their institutions, students would have the option to be connected to a thematic expert on sanitation workers, who would provide inputs at various stages of the research. Students will also be offered opportunities to network with their peers, in order to discuss, share and co-learn among themselves.
- **Publication support:** Support with the fee for publishing their research paper in fully Open Access journals or journals which have committed to fully transition to Open Access.

**Research timeline and outputs:** It is expected that the data collection would be completed no later than December 2022. We expect the following outputs from the study:

- (i) One study report or paper (publication support would be available for papers accepted for publication no later than the end of February 2023 – the invoice for the publication fee to be received by mid-March)
- (ii) One dissemination blog published by January 2023 (which could be, for instance, posted on the sanitation workers project platform)

**Application process:** Please submit your proposal using this [online application form](#). We welcome proposals in English as well as other languages such as French, Hindi and others. Applications will be reviewed by independent experts and the selection process will be conducted in two rounds, as mentioned below:

Application cycle	Deadline	Awarded by
I	20 Aug 2021	Oct 2021
II	31 Jan 2022	Mar 2022

**Evaluation criteria:**

- i. Well defined research objectives, and their relevance to one or more themes mentioned above
- ii. Clear outcomes which potentially contribute to improvement in the situation of sanitation workers
- iii. Clearly defined research scope and methodology
- iv. Mechanisms for participation of and/or consultation with sanitation workers, their representatives or their communities, as well as linkages to local authorities/governments, and/or other local stakeholders, at various stages of the study
- v. Research ethics considerations (including COVID-19 safety protocol; respecting agency and ensuring dignity of sanitation workers; informed consent, etc.)
- vi. Well-defined budget and timelines
- vii. Plan for dissemination of the study and engagement plan with stakeholders