Semanggi Village is located in Pasar Kliwon Sub-district of Surakarta City. It is bordered by Bengawan Solo River to the east, Sangkrah Village to the north, Sukoharjo District to the south, and Pasar Kliwon Village to the west. The village covers 166.82 hectares and has a population of 32,830 people (or 8,745 households) which is distributed across 131 neighborhood units (RT) and 23 administrative units (RW).

The local government of Surakarta City and the sanitation working group (Pokja Sanitasi) of Surakarta proposed Semanggi Village as the location to implement the “Kampung Sanitasi” (Sanitation Neighborhood) program due to its pronounced water supply and sanitation needs as reflected not only by service provision rates, but rates of water and sanitation borne disease as well. The densely populated RW 23 has five neighborhood units, a population of 1,750 (or 350 households). Most of the households of RW 23 are classified as low-income, with the majority of workers engaged in informal sector activities such as petty trade, parking attendants, casual labor, construction work, and ironsmithing.

Condition of Water Supply and Sanitation in RW 23 Semanggi Village

In general, the water and sanitation infrastructure of Semanggi Village in general and of RW 23 in particular is very poor. There is only one public hydrant supplying clean water from the local water utility (or PDAM) to RW 23. To meet their daily needs for drinking and cooking, most of the households buy water from this public hydrant at Rp 500 per 20 liter bucket (and on average require 2-4 buckets per day). Meanwhile, for daily washing, bathing and other needs, many households rely on shallow wells for which the groundwater is generally unsafe and brackish due to cross-contamination with household waste and improper wastewater disposal.

In terms of sanitation, only 10% of the population has access to a household toilet and 40% still practice open defecation in or close to the river nearby. In 2005, the local government of Surakarta City through the Public Works Office, built a six-stall public toilet, washing and bathing facility (or “MCK”) for the community. However, as it is designed to serve perhaps 300, it is wholly insufficient for serving the area’s total population of 1,750. As a result, residents of RW 23 have generally very poor hand-washing practices, household wastewater and black water is directly disposed of into gutters and the river, and the population is characterized by high rates of diarrhea, skin infections, and other water and sanitation borne disease.

In response to the above, IUWASH, Pokja Sanitasi Surakarta, and a local non-governmental organization (Lembaga Pengembangan Teknologi Pedesaan or “LPTP”; or Rural Technology Development Institution), are collaborating in piloting a project, known as “Kampung Sanitasi” to improve sanitation and hygiene-related practices for 350 households and which involves educational campaigns, the construction of new sanitation facilities for 150 households, the installation of a piped water supply system for 100 households, as well as related training to ensure proper operation and maintenance and, ultimately, the long-term sustainability of the new facilities.