

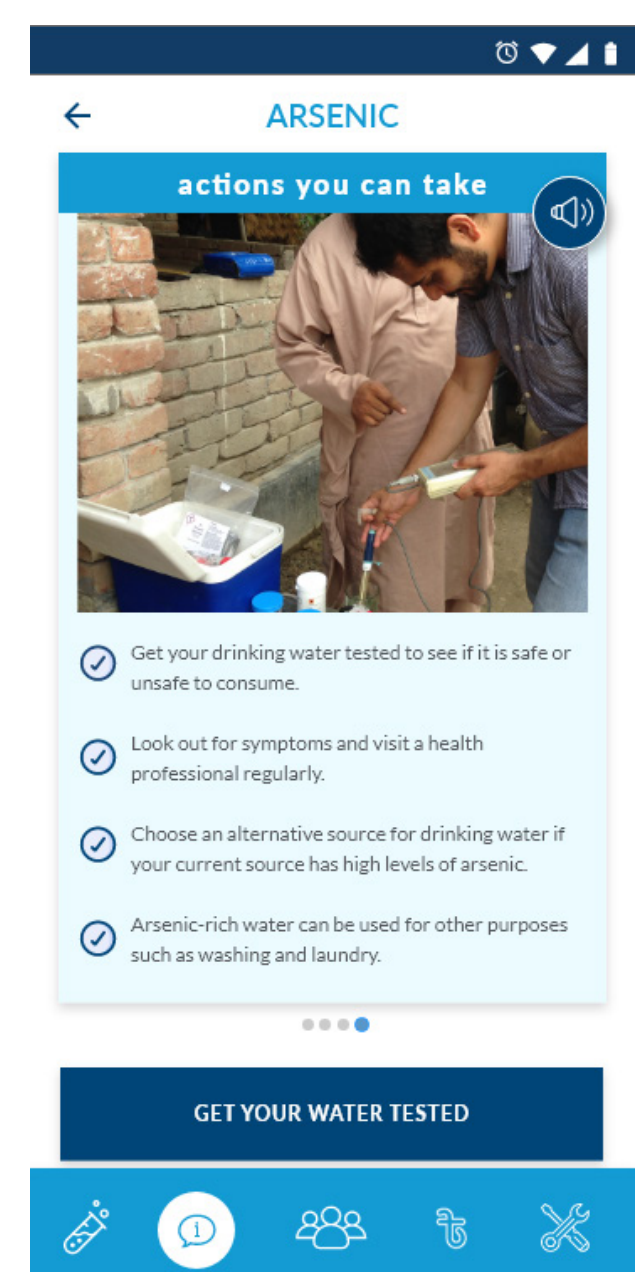
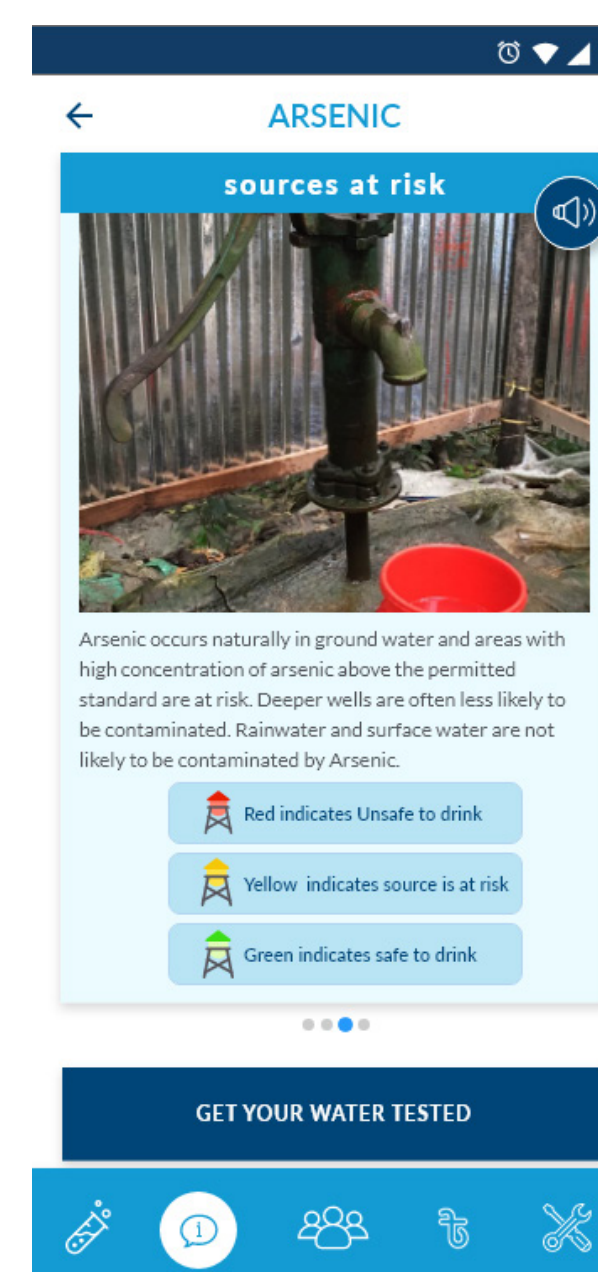
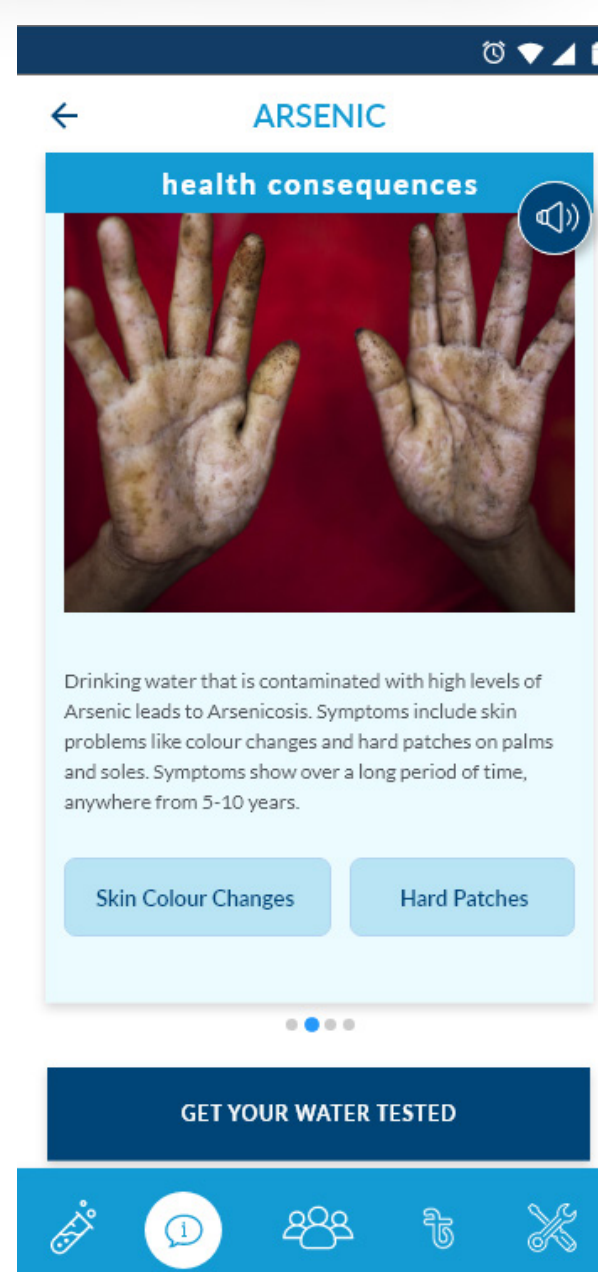
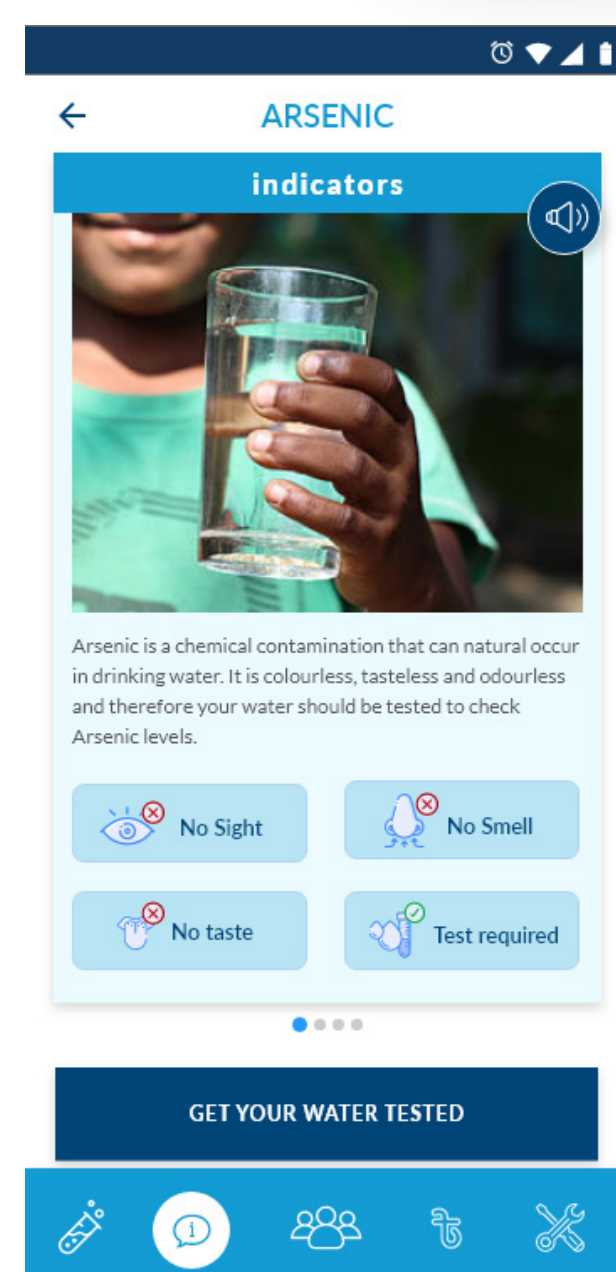
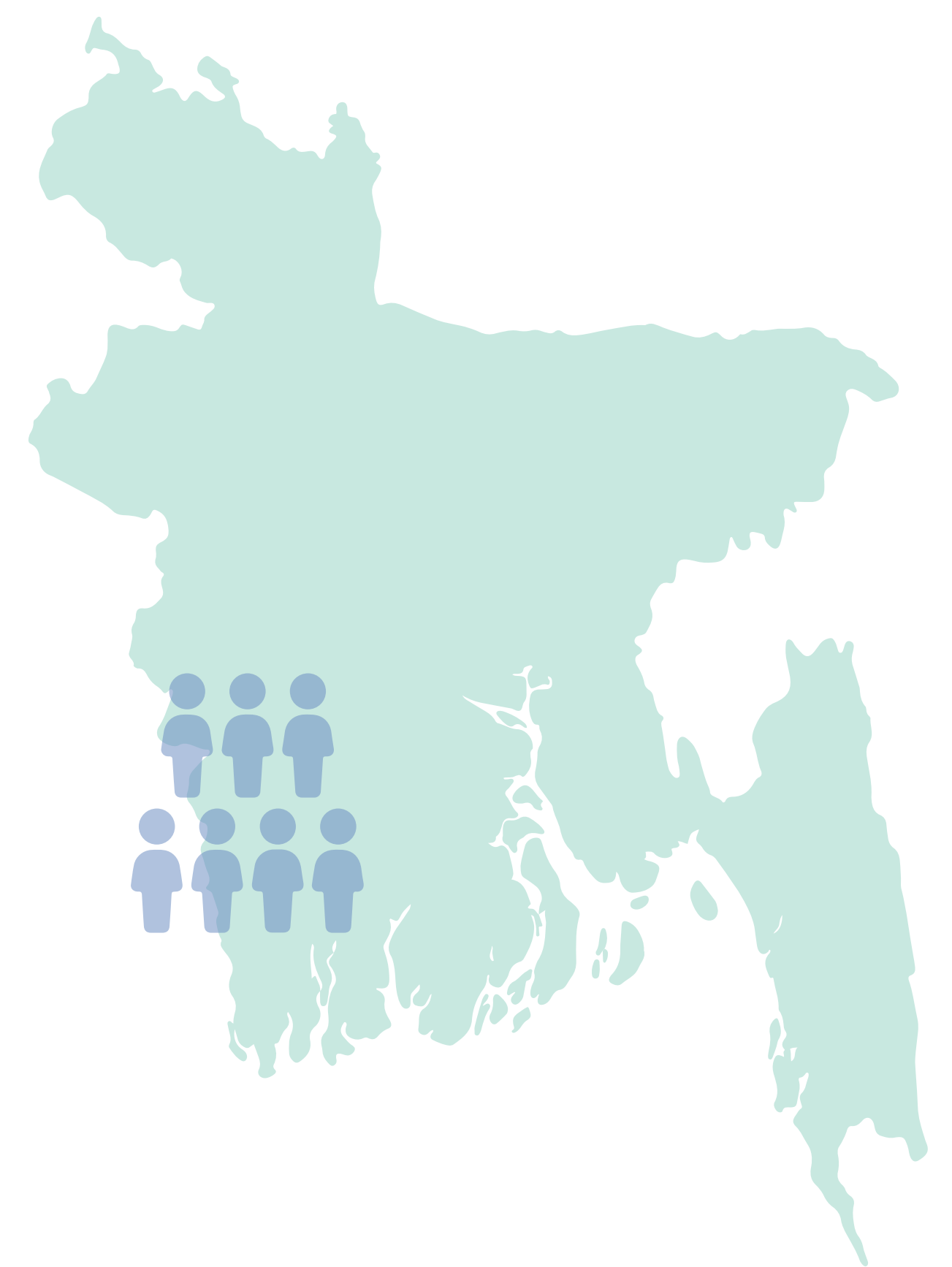
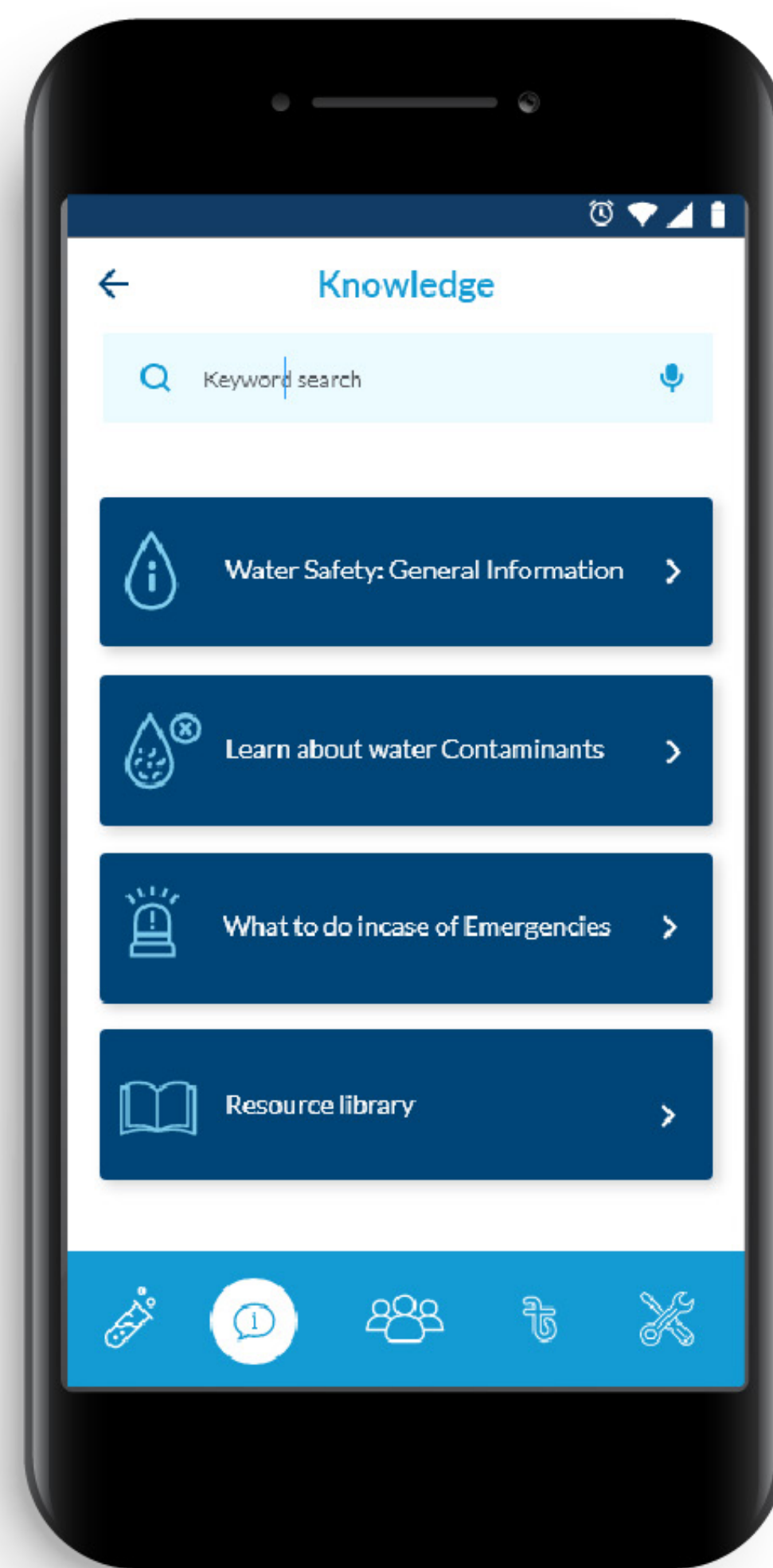
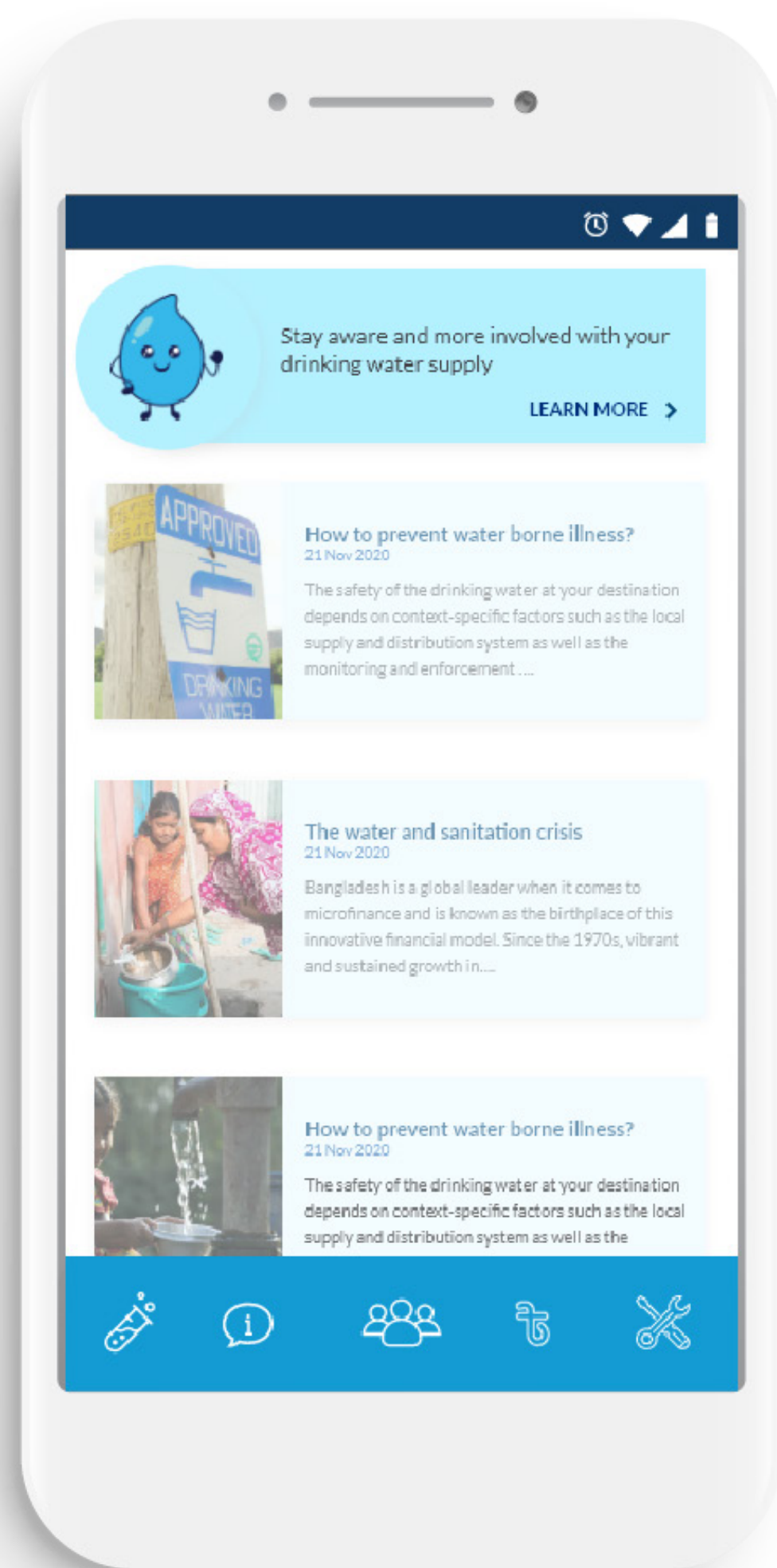
Information and awareness as a means to develop piped water supply systems in rural and peri-urban Bangladesh

When we think about the fact that 70% of the earth is covered by water, it may be easy to assume that water is abundant and that it would never have to be an issue in terms of having a constant supply to drink. In reality, it is a very complex matter for everyone to be able to access and drink safe water. Water is essential to maintain life on earth but as a resource it is not always located and in the state that is ideal for consumption. Often what is accessible is either contaminated, in dispute or not appropriate for its intended use. With regards to water safety, Bangladesh is the country with the largest proportion of people exposed to arsenic contamination around the world, the situation of which has been described by the World Health Organisation (2010) as the “largest mass poisoning of a population in history”.

From the various technologies available, it has been established that Piped Water Supply Systems show a lot of promise in providing safe water to Rural and Peri-Urban communities of Bangladesh. Issues with this new system include lack of trust in the system, high costs, infrastructural and technical issues and operation and maintenance issues. These along with a lack of knowledge on water safety and varied literacy rates are some of the factors that contribute to low acceptance of the system.

Awareness and educational campaigns have had a positive influence on communities regarding their choice of safe water sources. New and effective methods of building awareness through different channels is needed for long term impact and behaviour change. Approximately 50% of the rural households own and use smart phones with Internet access, and this number is rapidly increasing. This shows scope for monitoring water supply systems and building knowledge with smart phones in order to reach and engage communities.

Uncertainties within the system were identified and information topics under the themes of Water quality, Health, Water practices and Water sources was designed to be communicated to the people of Bangladesh through the TAPP smart phone application, in order to build their knowledge and understanding of water safety. The long term goals of this project includes acceptance and engagement of Bangladeshi communities towards Piped Water Supply(PWS) systems and to affect the behaviour of people with regards to their choices on consuming safe drinking water. The use of ICT as the communication channel is relatively low cost and has a broad range of possibility to reach the citizens. The impact can be great if the knowledge penetrates within the families, and thus help in changing people's decisions around drinking water.



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