



The Global Public-Private Partnership to Promote

# Handwashing with Soap



## Handwashing with soap could save a million lives

Diarrhoea kills two million children every year. Human excreta is the source of most diarrhoeal pathogens and probably the most important moments at which hands should be washed with soap are after contact with human excreta, and before handling food. A recent review of all the available evidence suggests that handwashing with soap could reduce diarrhoea incidence by 42-46% and save at least one million lives<sup>1</sup>.



## The Global Public-Private Partnership to Promote Handwashing

Handwashing with soap may be an old idea, but it is far from universally practiced. Combining the expertise and resources of the soap industry with the facilities and resources of governments to promote handwashing with soap is one obvious solution. While governments and development agencies want to combat disease and poverty, industry is interested in expanding its market. The World Bank and the Water and Sanitation Program (WSP), the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), the Academy for Educational Development (AED) and the private sector, in collaboration with USAID, UNICEF, and the Bank-Netherlands Water Partnership<sup>2</sup> are developing a global initiative aimed at promoting the use of handwashing with soap in developing countries. Work has started in Ghana and India. The results are being monitored and the lessons documented and disseminated. The work is now expanding to four other countries, Senegal, Peru, China and Nepal.





The Central American Initiative

## 'Lavo mis manos por salud'

In 1996-1999 the USAID-supported Central American Handwashing Initiative<sup>3</sup> showed that soap companies are capable and willing partners for health promotion activities. Four private soap companies launched handwashing campaigns in three countries (Guatemala, Costa Rica, and El Salvador) in collaboration with the public sector.

### | Objective |

To improve handwashing behavior in order to reduce diarrhoeal diseases among children under five.

### | Communication Program |

- Behavioral research to determine baseline and consumers' handwashing habits
- Mass media coverage (both educational and commercial)
- Rural distribution and promotional activities by soap companies
- Community activities through the public sector, NGOs and foundations (schools, municipal and health center programs)
- Monitoring and evaluation

### | Key Results |

- Improved handwashing behavior and decreased incidence of diarrhoeal diseases

- 30% increase in hygienic handwashing behavior in mothers.
- An estimated 300,000 fewer cases of diarrhoea a year in poor children under five in Guatemala.
- Leverage of resources
- Sustained involvement of the private sector in social programs

### | Partners |

USAID, Colgate-Palmolive-Guatemala, La Popular S.A.-Guatemala, Unisola/Unilever-El Salvador, Punto Rojo-Costa Rica, Ministries of Health and Education, media companies, UNICEF, NGOs, Foundations...

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## Objectives of the Initiative

- To reduce the incidence of diarrhoeal diseases in poor communities through Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) promoting handwashing with soap.
- To implement large scale handwashing interventions and use lessons to promote the approach at global level.

The idea is to get private industry and the public sector to work together with other partners to develop programs to promote handwashing. The non-branded programs are open to all interested parties, both public and private, targeting those most at risk (mothers, children, the poor) across the whole population. Based on detailed consumer studies, these programs reach out to target audiences through mass media, direct consumer contact and government channels of communication. The programs also gather knowledge through action research and detailed monitoring and evaluation.

## Key results of first phase activities

(February 2001 to June 2002)

### At the global level, the team has:

- set up an international advisory group;
- published the Central America Handwashing experience;
- carried out a study of the experience of PPPs in the health sector;
- studied the world market for soap;
- worked with the three biggest multinational soap companies on perspectives for expansion to new countries; and
- developed a project proposal that was approved by the Bank-Netherlands Water Partnership as a flagship project.

### After a year in the field, the partners have:

- established bases in India and Ghana;
- built local partnerships with industry associations, industrial and small-scale manufacturers, Ministries, external support agencies (ESAs) and NGOs;

- set up national or state-level steering committees and made concerted advocacy efforts;
- designed, commissioned, and assisted in the execution of studies of soap consumption and the soap market in Ghana and Kerala, India; and
- designed communications programs to promote handwashing across Ghana. Government and external support agencies have made funding commitments, whilst the private sector is providing technical and managerial skills and resources.

## Second phase activities include

(June 2002 to July 2003)

- Support implementation of the handwashing campaign in Ghana
- Improve methodology for consumer research
- Establish baseline and monitoring and evaluation indicators
- Expand program to more countries: Senegal, Peru, Nepal and China
- Follow-up, monitor and assess campaigns
- Research on cost-effectiveness of handwashing interventions
- Promotion of global experience sharing and continued advocacy
- Finalize a monitoring and evaluation system and test it in Ghana
- Conduct a cost-effectiveness study
- Share experience with other organizations involved in handwashing promotion and preventative health

## Steps followed to develop a handwashing initiative

- 1 Assessment of the incidence and costs of diarrhoea and likely benefits of a reduction of diarrhoeal diseases in children.
- 2 Mapping the existing hygiene education programs.
- 3 Building partnerships between public and private actors involved in public health, water supply and hygiene products.
- 4 Establishment of advisory and implementation task force and vigorous communication to all parties involved.
- 5 Analysis of the market for handwashing soap and consumer habits.
- 6 Design of communications programs to support a large scale handwashing promotion program.
- 7 Fundraising through partners.
- 8 Implementation of communication campaign.
- 9 Monitoring and evaluation of results and impact.

## A win-win public-private partnership for handwashing

### 1 Promoting a vital behavior and a product

Handwashing with soap is equivalent to a 'do-it-yourself vaccine' and could be promoted as widely and effectively as vaccinations. Washing hands with soap after contact with fecal material (after using the toilet or after cleaning up a child) prevents the transmission of the bacteria, viruses, intestinal parasites, and protozoa that cause diarrhoeal diseases. However, changing the habits of a lifetime is not so easy and requires a huge and concerted effort. The task will be made easier if the private sector can offer affordable products specifically for handwashing.

### 2 The gaps to address

We have learnt from past experience that:

- short-lived hygiene education programs, mostly in the public sector, have had little impact;
- covering large populations cost-effectively is very difficult through traditional participatory methods, even if these may be effective at improving hygiene on a small scale; and
- soap is widely available, even in poor households, but is not generally used for handwashing at critical times.

### 3 Combining resources to reach the poorest groups

Finding new customers and encouraging more handwashing requires an in-depth understanding of the target consumer needs in order to find effective ways of marketing the appropriate products and behaviors. Social marketing style approaches based on adequate formative research into risk behavior, context, and motivation are beginning to show good results. The skills and resources of both public and private sector are needed if handwashing is to be promoted successfully on a wide scale.

The public-private partnership dedicated to handwashing pools resources and risk and provide added value over what each party could achieve alone. There are obvious benefits to both sides:

- **For the public agencies and governments:** To achieve public health goals and learn from soap manufacturers' expertise in crafting effective communication programs.
- **For the industry:** To learn more about consumer demands and expand the consumer base to include poorer households
- **For both sectors:** To understand and change behaviors for better health. To make the campaigns sustainable over the long run, without making infrastructure investments, through creating synergies with existing initiatives in water supply and sanitation.

The PPP in Ghana

# GHANA: 'Clean hands, healthy life'

### | Objective |

To increase handwashing with soap by 25% among mothers and caregivers of children and by 50% among school children.

### | Communication Program |

- Consumer and soap market knowledge
- Target all 2.5 million women with children under five
- Reach 19,000 primary and secondary schools in 110 districts and 1,800 health centers
- Integrated mass media and direct consumer contact (DCC) program
- Public relations program in support of handwashing
- Detailed monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

### | Partners |

Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA), Ministry of Works and Housing  
Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education,  
Ministry of Women and Children's affairs,



Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Unilever, PZ-Cussons, Getrade, Association of Ghanaian Industries, others.

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### How can we support you?

The Global PPP Handwashing Initiative is a learning-as-you-go process. Visit our website at <http://www.globalhandwashing.org> for materials on:

- Publications and other learning products
- A newsletter and up-dates on the initiative
- Links to other handwashing initiatives and partners

Or contact us at any of the following addresses:

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<sup>1</sup> Curtis V., Cairncross S, "Effect of Washing Hands with Soap on Diarrhoea Risk in the Community: a Systematic Review".  
<sup>2</sup> The Bank-Netherlands Water Partnership is a facility that enhances World Bank operations to increase delivery of water supply and sanitation services to the poor (for more information see <http://www.worldbank.org/watsan/bnwp>).  
<sup>3</sup> Implemented by BASICS (Basic Support for Institutionalizing Child Survival) and the Environmental Health Project (EHP). See publication, "The Story of a Successful Public-Private Partnership in Central America: Handwashing for Diarrheal Disease Prevention" and the mini-cd (February 2002).