



# The Global Public-Private Partnership to Promote Handwashing with Soap

## Handwashing with Soap Saves Lives

Diarrhoea kills two million children every year and causes over 10 billion disease episodes. Human excreta is the source of most diarrhoeal pathogens. Handwashing with soap after contact with human excreta, and before handling food, prevents the transmission of the bacteria, viruses, and protozoa that cause diarrhoeal diseases. A recent review of all the available evidence suggests that handwashing with soap could reduce diarrhoea incidence by 42-46 percent and save at least a millions lives per year<sup>1</sup>.

## The Public-Private Partnership to Promote Handwashing

Harnessing the combined efforts and expertise of soap companies and public agencies has shown in pilot projects to be an effective way to increase the rate of handwashing with soap. The soap industry gains via market expansion, particularly into poorer areas. Public agencies gain by leveraging their health messages via marketing campaign strategies.

Market expansion requires an in-depth understanding of target consumer needs. Within the partnership, public and private organizations work together to produce consumer research and to design, implement, and evaluate subsequent handwashing promotion campaigns.

In addition to increasing handwashing among target groups, the approach gives high visibility to the issues of hygiene and sanitation, oft-overlooked components of water supply and sanitation projects. The Public-Private Partnership for Handwashing (PPPHW) is a pioneering example of a public-private partnership for health and the

initiative is documenting lessons for use by other groups considering similar campaigns. The PPPHW built on and extends an existing initiative in Ghana. It has currently expanded to Nepal, Senegal, Peru, and Madagascar.

The Partnership was initiated in 2001 and has received main funding from the Bank-Netherlands Water Partnership (BNWP), USAID, and the Water and Sanitation Program.

## Objectives of the PPPHW

- To reduce the incidence of diarrhoeal disease, in particular among children under five, by making handwashing with soap at critical times universally recognized, promoted, and practiced.
- To implement large scale handwashing interventions and use lessons learned to promote the approach at the global level.

The PPPHW seeks to bring together private industry and the public sector to work together to develop optimal approaches to handwashing promotion and implement large scale country programs.

## Partners

Key PPPHW partners include the World Bank/BNWP, the Water and Sanitation Program, USAID/ Hygiene Improvement Project, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, UNICEF, the, CDC, Colgate-Palmolive, Procter & Gamble, Unilever, and various national soap companies, governments, and NGOs.

## Key Activities and Results of the PPPHW

Currently, PPPHW implementation includes the following work components:

1. Provision of technical support, including international marketing expertise, to projects in Ghana, Nepal, Peru, Senegal, and Madagascar; and
2. Global advocacy and the development of tools for the effective replication of the handwashing partnership approach.

During the initial phase of the Partnership (February, 2001, to June, 2003), the PPPHW:

- Set up an international advisory group
- Carried out a study of PPP experiences in the health sector
- Studied the world market for soap
- Advocated for HWS in at international conferences in Johannesburg, 2002, and Kyoto, 2003
- Established an agreement with UNICEF to develop first phase in Nepal
- Responded to demand from Peru, Senegal, and Madagascar,
- Provided continuous technical assistance to country teams
- Organized a cross-country workshop in Ghana, May, 2003
- Established a Monitoring and Evaluation Protocol; and
- Developed consumer research guidelines

... and the national teams in Ghana, Peru and Senegal :

- Built local public-private partnerships
- Set up national Steering Committees
- Developed handwashing behavior and soap market studies; and
- Developed a communications strategy (Ghana only).

Key results and activities in the second phase (July 2003, to June, 2005) of the PPPHW include:

- Launch of Ghana's PPP for HWS campaign (September, 2003), which included award-winning media advertising

- Finalization of consumer research and consolidation of partnership in Nepal
- A finalized monitoring and evaluation framework, with ongoing testing in Ghana and Peru
- Communications strategies for Peru and Senegal
- Technical cross-country workshop held in Lima, Peru, November, 2003
- Ongoing cost-effectiveness study of handwashing vs. other public health interventions
- Compilation and publication of the PPPHW experience in a Handwashing Handbook (available on [www.globalhandwashing.org](http://www.globalhandwashing.org)); and
- PPPHW Global Learning Workshop held in Washington, DC, March 2005.

### Next Steps

Handwashing campaigns are under development and will be launched by the PPPs in Senegal and Peru in 2005. In Ghana, the PPP will be undertaking an evaluation of the first phase of the HWS campaign as well as engaging in preparation of the second phase.

PPPs for handwashing are underway in Vietnam, Indonesia, and Colombia. The Partnership has seen a substantial interest in the approach from other countries and plans to expand the number of participating countries.

**For more information on the PPPHW, please visit the Global Handwashing website at:**  
[www.globalhandwashing.org](http://www.globalhandwashing.org)

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<sup>i</sup> Curtis, V., & S. Cairncross. (2003). Effect of washing hands with soap on diarrhoea risk in the community : A systematic review. *The Lancet Infectious Diseases*, 3, 275-281.