

The Global Public-Private Partnership for Handwashing with Soap

The Global Public-Private Partnership for Handwashing (PPPHW) was established in 2001 with the objective of reducing morbidity and mortality among children due to diarrheal disease through promotion of handwashing with soap at critical times.

The PPPHW brings together both public and private-sector actors with a shared interest in promoting handwashing with soap. Partners include USAID, UNICEF, World Bank Water and Sanitation Program, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, AED, JHU/CCP, Procter & Gamble, Unilever, Colgate Palmolive, etc.

At the global level, the PPPHW works to support country-level implementation of national handwashing initiatives, capture and share learning from the country programs, and conduct targeted research within the handwashing sector. At the country level, the PPPHW advocates for, and assists in, the planning and implementing of large-scale national handwashing programs.

The PPPHW in Peru was initiated in 2003. The objectives of the initiative are 1) the adoption of handwashing with soap in a sustainable way by rural and urban families and 2) the reduction of chronic diarrhea, respiratory infections and malnutrition among children under five. The program intends to impact 3.8 million women and children and to achieve behavior change in 1.3 million of them.

Key steps in implementing a national handwashing initiative include:

- Building a national partnership. In Peru, partners include government at the national regional and local level (Ministries of Health, Education and Housing, Sanitation and Construction), NGOs and the private sector. Unlike some other countries, private partners in Peru are not soap manufacturers but are drawn from a spectrum of different businesses (e.g., Belcorp – network of door-to-door cosmetic sales people who also carry handwashing messages; Chamber of Commerce, Mining company, agricultural firms)
- Researching behavioral determinants to identify handwashing habits, barriers, and drivers, and the best ways to communicate to the target audience;
- Based on the research, designing a large scale national handwashing promotion strategy
- Implementing an at-scale model for handwashing behavior change that include a targeted mass communication strategy; operations research; promotion of enabling products and technologies to facilitate handwashing behavior (e.g., water saving devices that were designed and marketed by a private partner to facilitate handwashing in water scarce areas);
- Social mobilization to include NGOs, community organizations, local committees, health centers, schools, etc. Establishing formal agreements with each partner.
- Measuring and evaluating results. A second phase of the Handwashing initiative in Peru includes a significant investment by the Gates Foundation that allows for “impact evaluation” – assessing the impact of the initiative on diarrheal disease,

- respiratory infections and malnutrition in addition to prevalence of handwashing with soap among the target population.
- Ensuring sustainability by institutionalizing the initiative in participating national institutions and developing appropriate policies (e.g., incorporating curriculum and accreditation for teacher training on hygiene into the educational system)

Highlights of the initiative in Peru are:

- Forging an alliance between authorities, teachers, parents, health professionals and community leaders;
- Building on existing health, education and water and sanitation strategies;
- Designing a robust handwashing promotion initiative in schools that involves the students in classroom activities and as agents of change in their households and communities;
- Developing a training strategy to build the capacity of the above alliance for handwashing promotion and;
- Local campaigns using a combination of mass media and promotional events with messages and channels appropriate to each audience. In addition to use of local radio and TV, the campaign strategy includes parades, street theatre, concerts and artistic contests.