



Public-Private Partnership for Handwashing with Soap Initiative in Nepal

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Despite improvements in water and sanitation infrastructure, diarrheal diseases remain major public health problems, especially among children under-five in Nepal. According to the Nepal 2001 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), an estimated 28,000 children die in Nepal each year due to diarrheal diseases.

To contribute to the reduction of diarrheal diseases in Nepal, UNICEF/Nepal in collaboration with USAID, the World Bank, local government ministries, and private partners is launching a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) to promote a handwashing with soap initiative. The initiative is modeled after a successful USAID-led PPP process launched in five Central American countries in the late 1990s that produced a 50% increase in handwashing with soap among mothers and reduced diarrheal diseases in children under-five.

Rationale for the Initiative

- Though awareness of handwashing is high, there is a need to increase the community understanding of the link between proper handwashing with soap and prevention of diarrhea. For example, the 2002 study conducted by New Era, a local research firm, suggested that among a total of 1,000 study participants, only 39% cited diarrhea prevention as a reason for washing hands.
- There is a need to make a connection between hygiene promotion, with the accessibility of water and sanitation facilities on the one hand and the production and distribution of affordable soap on the other hand. For example, a 2000 Nepal Between Census Household Information, Monitoring and Evaluation System (BCHIMES) Report on the Situation of

Women, Children and Households, stated that water supply systems are now within reach of a majority or 77.9% of the population, making handwashing with soap even more feasible.

- Furthermore, the handwashing initiative will serve as a catalyst to strengthen existing sanitation programs that focus on handwashing, such as the school sanitation and hygiene education program, and other programs at the national, district, and community levels under Nepal's national sanitation campaign.

Objective

The objective of the Nepal initiative is to reduce diarrhea incidence in children under-five through a coordinated communication campaign promoting proper handwashing with soap. The initiative is based on the concept that private firms and public entities would find it mutually beneficial to work in partnership to achieve complementary profits and gains in promoting handwashing with soap to prevent diarrhea. For example, one of the key goals of the initiative is the expansion into new markets, particularly in low income rural areas. Thus, the soap industry stands to gain by selling more soap in newer markets, while the public agencies move toward the desired objective of improved handwashing practices and a reduction in diarrheal diseases.

Tools

As part of USAID's support to the Nepal initiative, EHP worked with a marketing and communication consulting firm to develop a series of planning tools that were used in the planning and development of the initiative. These tools can be used and/or adapted by public or private sector



organizations interested in initiating a PPP for handwashing initiative. The tools include:

1. A Request for Proposal (RFP)—to solicit proposals from various research firms. The RFP outlined the terms of reference for the required research study
2. A Research Plan—to provide research firms with detailed criteria of the research requirements
3. Criteria for Selecting Research Firms—to provide the client (UNICEF) with a balanced approach in selecting the research firm to implement the research
4. Summary of Talking Points—to help generate support from private sector soap companies to join the partnership. The talking points focused on key benefits for potential partners joining the initiative
5. Partner Tracking/Funding Tool—a management tool that would provide the client (UNICEF) with an effective, easy way to organize and track various partner activities
6. Draft Creative Brief—a draft creative brief to assist interested advertising agencies in preparing the campaign logo, theme/slogan and storyboard as part of their bidding process. The brief was attached to the RFP as a sample
7. Guidelines for Selecting an Advertising Agency
8. Marketing Strategy—a strategy for the client that included: communication objectives, research requirements to guide the development of the campaign and identify key messages; identification of the positioning platforms; target audience and target geographic areas; partnership building and advocacy; marketing and communication channels; and monitoring and evaluation



Meena washing hands (“Meena” is UNICEF’s trademark South Asian girl-child character used in campaigns) Source: UNICEF

9. Organizing a Stakeholder Workshop—a strategy to assist the client (UNICEF) organize stakeholder workshops (the preparatory and planning stages of the campaign development included implementation of stakeholder workshops to secure the commitment of private sector soap companies).

Conclusion

Using the planning tools, the following have been accomplished to date: a research firm has been selected; formative and baseline research has been completed and the information shared in three stakeholder workshops; the interest and commitment of leading soap manufacturers to participate in the PPP handwashing initiative has been secured; a marketing strategy has been developed; and an advertising agency has been selected.

Phase two of the campaign will focus on production and distribution of campaign materials and launching of the campaign by mid-2004.

Following the launch phase, the remaining phases of the campaign—implementation and evaluation—will be conducted through 2005.

A report, “Planning Tools for the Nepal Public-Private Partnership for Handwashing Initiative,” will be available from EHP: <http://www.ehproject.org>. For more information on PPP initiatives, also visit www.globalhandwashing.org.