



Photo credit: ActionAid Kenya

# The Hygiene & Behaviour Change Coalition (HBCC)

Harnessing the power of public-private  
partnerships in response to COVID-19

# Executive Summary

**In March 2020, the world span into uncertainty. COVID-19 was a global pandemic. There were no vaccinations or known treatments, making hygiene a critical line of defence.**

Yet for some, the simple, lifesaving act of handwashing with soap was not an option, and the consequences that followed were both unavoidable and catastrophic. This uncompromising state of inequity worldwide meant something more had to be done.

Joining forces, Unilever and the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) established the Hygiene and Behaviour Change Coalition (HBCC), with a goal to limit the spread of COVID-19 in low- and middle-income countries. Leveraging its networks within the public, private and academic sectors, the HBCC harnessed its collective strengths to respond at both speed and scale, with its delivery executed by NGO (non-government organisations) and UN partners on the ground.

Between March 2020 and December 2021, this award-winning public-private partnership has reached more than 1 billion people with lifesaving behaviour-change messaging, hygiene products and access to training and education.

This report encapsulates the learnings from the HBCC, shaped to inform future responses to global health crises and demonstrate handwashing with soap and good hygiene as the simplest and most cost-effective way to avoid millions of preventable deaths each year. Through case studies and insights, we showcase the value of access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) in health, how to engage and encourage adoption of good hygiene practices worldwide, and the power of public-private partnerships to support it.

How do you achieve lifesaving behaviour change at scale, while the world and a virus changed by the day? Let's tell you how we did it...



Photo credit: WaterAid Tanzania

## Contents

- 04** | **Introduction**
  - Creating the Hygiene and Behaviour Change Coalition (HBCC)
  - On the ground
  - Our impact
- 12** | **Changing behaviour at scale**
  - One consistent message
  - Behaviour change programmes
  - Digital tools and delivery
- 20** | **Creating an enabling environment for hygiene behaviours**
  - Access to hygiene facilities
  - Essential hygiene products
  - Strengthening capacity through training
- 24** | **Reaching the most vulnerable**
  - People with disabilities
  - Working with refugees
  - Empowering women and girls
- 30** | **Looking to the future**
  - Building on the foundations and achievements of the HBCC
  - Learning from the HBCC
  - Raising the profile of handwashing for lasting change
  - Calls to action

# Creating the Hygiene and Behaviour Change Coalition

## A rapid, collaborative response to limit the spread of COVID-19

Leveraging the strengths of each individual partner, the HBCC became greater than the sum of its parts - accelerating its response to COVID-19 through a unified approach that one partner could not do alone.

**It gave delivery partners access to products, expertise and educational materials.**

**It enabled a business to respond to COVID-19 rapidly and at scale.**

**It provided access for a government to effectively deploy its resources.**

**It generated rolling insights from technical experts for necessary adaptations.**

### INSIGHT

Responding to an unknown health threat meant agility was key across varying contexts and geographies. Regular sharing sessions between partners allowed the coalition to learn from one another and effectively adjust to these evolving situations.



Photo credit: CARE International Jordan

## Combining expertise and resources to achieve scale and impact



### Private Sector Partner

As a leading fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) company, Unilever donated more than £44M worth of its range of essential hygiene products. Contributing with its expertise in mass media and hygiene behaviour change, Unilever provided high-quality behaviour-change materials from its established hygiene and sanitation brands, Lifebuoy and Domestos, and tapped into its network of global media capacity to support the coalition. Additionally, Unilever was able to support effective and affordable hygiene campaigns and connect delivery partners to regional media broadcasters. Unilever teams also led the day-to-day management of the coalition.



### Public Sector Partner

As well as funding, the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) was well positioned to respond quickly through its network of embassies and high commissions, as well as existing partnerships. With resources and expertise in humanitarian programme delivery, the FCDO helped to rapidly deploy a global program in the fight against COVID-19.



### Technical Partner

The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) supported the HBCC since its inception. Providing world-leading technical and academic expertise, along with the latest insights into COVID-19, it ensured that appropriate strategies were established in a very short time frame. Monitoring and evaluation enabled the coalition to improve and develop its programmes and hygiene and prevention messaging.



Photo credit: WaterAid Zambia

**COVID-19**

**HygieneHub**

The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) established the COVID-19 Hygiene Hub in April 2020 as a free global online service providing practical guidance, technical insight, best practice advice and learning. The innovative online platform supported organisations and governments worldwide to design and adapt evidence-based hygiene intervention at a rapid pace, limiting the spread of COVID-19.



## On the ground

Combining up to £50 million of government funding from the FCDO, matched by in-kind support from Unilever, this £100 million partnership enabled the rapid mobilisation of 21 NGO and UN partners to tackle the spread of COVID-19 across 37 countries. Focused on reaching the most vulnerable, the HBCC reached more than 1 billion people through 78 different projects.

Photo credit: UNHCR South Sudan



In a global pandemic which affects everyone but hits the most vulnerable hardest, collaboration between varied partners was not just beneficial, it was essential to ensure both wide and deep coverage of the response.

Unilever and the FCDO were some of the first to recognise this, pulling together the HBCC to unite global expertise and reach; enabling partners to leverage our collective approach and learn from individual experiences. By working at different levels – locally with ActionAid partners, nationally with HBCC partners, and globally with the coalition – we significantly increased the impact of our work and could pivot activities at speed by working together to adapt to the ever-changing context of the pandemic. I speak only for ActionAid but believe other HBCC partners would agree, that this coalition has provided valuable lessons and templates for future responses, and we will actively seek opportunities to work in broad coalitions in future.

**Rebecca Rawle**

Head of Private Sector Partnerships,  
ActionAid



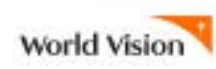
# Our focus and reach

Targeting areas and populations vulnerable to COVID-19



## Our partners

Changing the world with **women and girls**  
**act:onaid**



# Our impact

By the numbers



**1.2+**  
**BILLION**  
**PEOPLE**  
**REACHED**

**PRODUCTS**  
**DONATED BY**  
**UNILEVER**  
**78M**

**270K**  
**HANDWASHING**  
**FACILITIES**  
**INSTALLED**

**450K+**  
**KEY WORKERS**  
**TRAINED**

**MORE THAN**  
**14.5K**  
**HEALTHCARE**  
**FACILITIES**  
**PROMOTING**  
**HYGIENE**

Photo credit: PSI India

# Changing behaviour at scale

## Reaching millions despite lockdowns or locations

Combining traditional mass media communication – TV, radio, print – with digital tools, face-to-face materials and activities helped to provide a consistent, multi-format message to educate and reach more people. Such an approach enabled partners to pass on information about the virus quickly and effectively. This proved especially crucial during prolonged lockdowns, when the usual method of in-person training and activities became impossible.

Tracking the transmission of COVID-19, how to protect individuals and their wider community and reinforcing government-led measures could be communicated en masse. Meanwhile, thanks to advances in technology, messaging could reach people living in rural villages and informal urban settlements, enabling inclusion despite lockdowns or location. Input from project partners on the ground allowed for adaptations to messages that followed appropriate social customs and beliefs and tailored to connect and trigger change. Community and faith leaders were also engaged to help encourage uptake of messaging.

QR  
The  
'PASSWORD'  
campaign  
reached  
up to 200  
million  
people  
globally  
DD

## The 'PASSWORD' campaign

### CASE STUDY

#### How did a password unlock effective behaviour change at scale?

During the early stages of the pandemic, the world witnessed a variety of awareness campaigns shared through various channels and sources. These messages were often inconsistent, and many overlapped in content. There was an urgent need to reach millions of people with the same message, but mass communication campaigns are costly and not in the expertise of most NGOs.

Recognising an opportunity to do things differently, the HBCC developed a global, high-quality mass media campaign that could be used by all coalition partners for free.

In four simple words the 'password' **#HandFaceSpaceSurface** campaign encouraged handwashing with soap, mask wearing, maintaining physical space, and

practising safe surface hygiene. Ultimately, it provided clarity and consistency, underpinned by effective hygiene principles. Distilling the core message into one clear and focused campaign enabled the HBCC to prepare unified assets for TV, radio, billboards, digital and print media. Co-developed with partners on the ground, each asset was created for global use in Africa, South Asia, South-East Asia and the Middle East, adapted to local contexts and languages, and aligned with local government and national messaging. The campaign was translated into more than 30 languages and dialects and aired in 18 markets. This collaborative approach was highly successful, with the campaign reaching up to 200 million people with consistent hygiene messaging.



### INSIGHT

Creating a clear and unified campaign message with distinct guidelines, while still allowing partners to adapt assets to suit their local needs, unlocked greater geographical reach and behaviour change uptake.

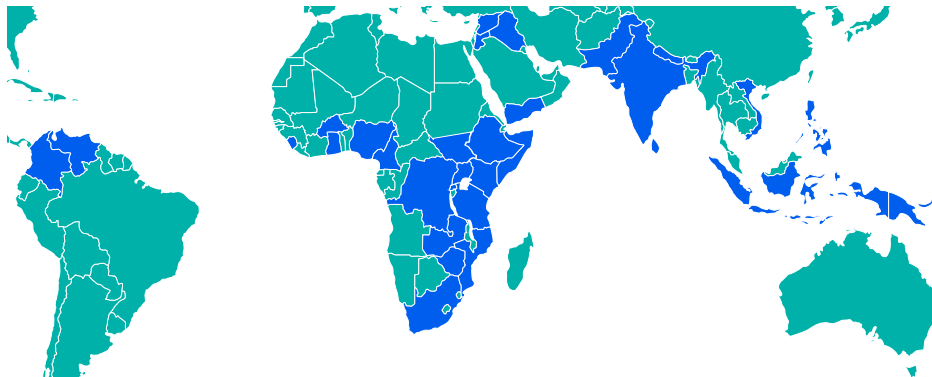
Photo credit: PASSWORD campaign

# Behaviour change programmes

## Decades of communications expertise

Unilever has decades of experience implementing insight-led hygiene behaviour change and mass media communications. Through its high-profile, established brands, behaviour change materials by Lifebuoy and Domestos were translated into 23 languages for the HBCC. This content was adapted to relate both to COVID-19 and the local context, and carefully integrated into partners' on-ground, digital and school programming.

These readily available materials gave many partners flexibility to use more communication channels. Being equipped with high-quality communications materials also provided a greater reach and positive engagement.



**9** SETS OF MATERIALS IN **23** LANGUAGES

**21** OF 37 HBCC COUNTRIES BY **13** HBCC PARTNERS



After learning about the importance of handwashing, we make sure small children wash their hands once they come home after playing, and again before they eat food. We are very grateful for the support... for providing us with soaps and educating us on how to wash our hands properly so we can stay healthy.<sup>1</sup>

**Martha**  
from Kapoeta,  
South Sudan.



<sup>1</sup><https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/blogs/2020/handwashing-saves-lives>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.domestos.com/uk/our-mission/our-projects/cleaner-toilets-brighter-futures>

## CASE STUDY

### Mum's Magic Hands

In 2014 Lifebuoy and the international charity Oxfam co-developed an initiative supporting hygiene behaviour change in refugee communities. Using colourful and creative illustrations across storyboards, group exercises and games, the Mum's Magic Hands campaign helped teach lifesaving hygiene behaviours. Mum's Magic Hands was the most popular of the existing Unilever behaviour change materials made available to the HBCC's partners.



It was translated into 19 languages and used by 11 partners in 16 countries. The use of Mum's Magic Hands in the HBCC's projects by different partners led to evolvments of the content for different cultural customisations, and adaptations to different users, including the creation of a 'Dad's Magic Hands' version. This created greater versatility and usefulness for future programming.



## Cleaner toilets, brighter futures

### CASE STUDY

In 2017 Unilever's Domestos cleaning brand created a dedicated programme for schools around the world. Using educational posters, checklists and training, this empowering scheme encouraged collaboration between cleaning staff, teachers and children to keep their school toilets clean and functional. The programme has seen great success. In fact, children visit the toilet 25% more frequently in schools where the Cleaner Toilets, Brighter Futures initiative has been implemented.<sup>2</sup>

During the pandemic, this programme was updated and adapted to focus on toilet usage and appropriate cleaning to help combat COVID-19, including guidance for cleaning high-touch surfaces such as door handles. All posters and information sheets were translated into 10 languages for the HBCC's partners to use in their projects. In Mozambique, the HBCC partner SNV even incorporated the Cleaner Toilets, Brighter Futures assets into a specific cleaning module developed for the country's Ministry of Health.





## Digital tools and delivery

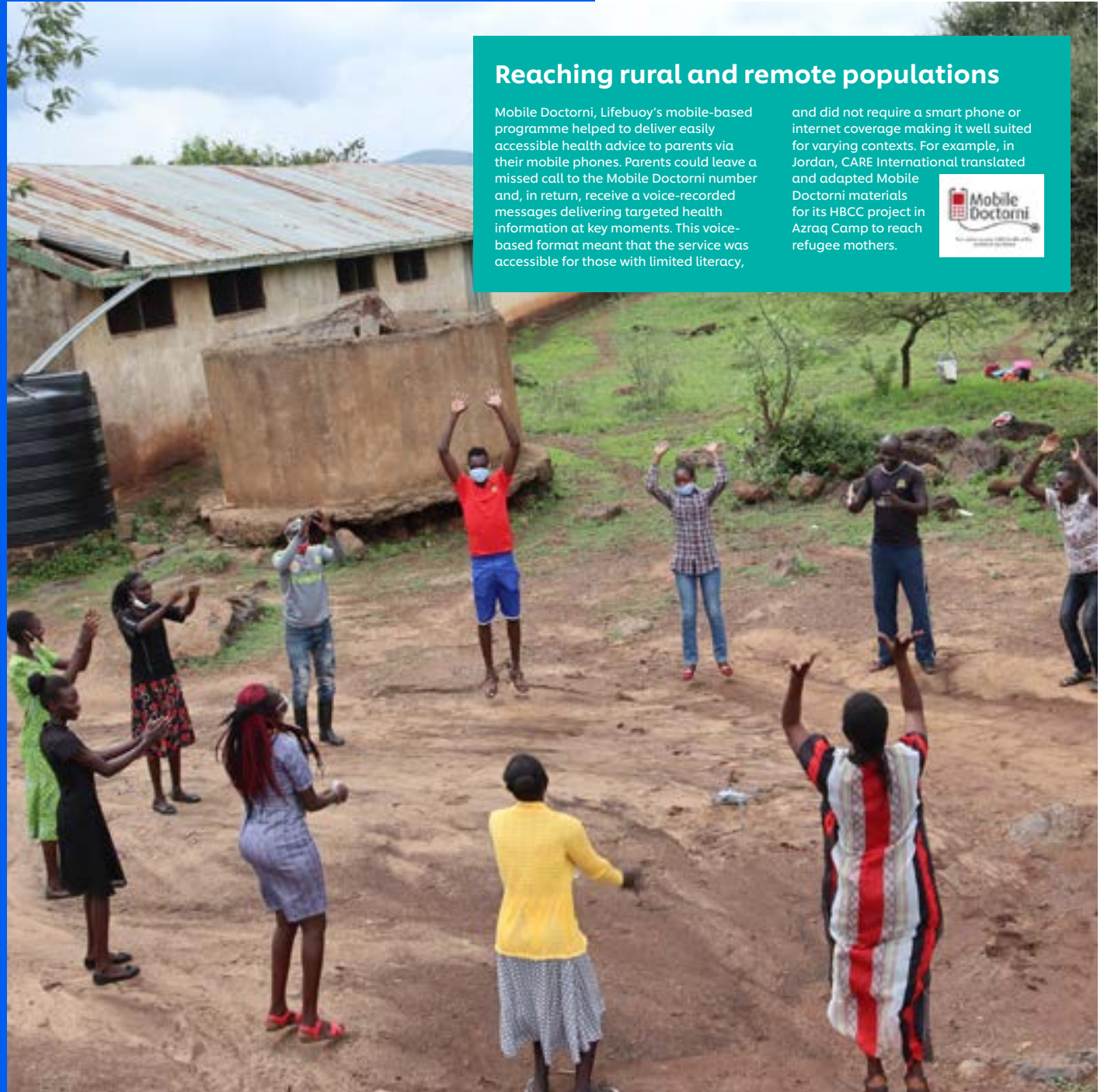
### Maintaining connection in a locked down world

Part of the HBCC's success throughout the pandemic was its adaptive approach in challenging, ever-changing environments. School closures, along with nationwide lockdowns, were commonplace across the globe as governments and health organisations desperately tried to stop the spread of COVID-19.

While digital tools can be innovative and incredibly versatile, they are not widely used in emergency programming. However, throughout local and national lockdowns, these tools became more important than ever, both providing a lifeline for communication between families, friends and communities and delivering news, information and guidance when people needed it most.



Photo credit: Save The Children South Sudan



### Reaching rural and remote populations

Mobile Doctorni, Lifebuoy's mobile-based programme helped to deliver easily accessible health advice to parents via their mobile phones. Parents could leave a missed call to the Mobile Doctorni number and, in return, receive a voice-recorded message delivering targeted health information at key moments. This voice-based format meant that the service was accessible for those with limited literacy,

and did not require a smart phone or internet coverage making it well suited for varying contexts. For example, in Jordan, CARE International translated and adapted Mobile Doctorni materials for its HBCC project in Azraq Camp to reach refugee mothers.



Photo credit: ActionAid Kenya

# Adapting to e-learning

Throughout the pandemic, e-learning became a crucial source for educational materials. HBCC partners adapted to the online environment with a range of solutions:

**SNV** digitised Unilever’s Lifebuoy School of 5 educational assets. This 21-day programme was originally created to teach children the benefits of handwashing in classrooms, but prolonged school lockdowns meant this needed to be moved online so children could continue access at homes.

**Save the Children** used an eLearning course for healthcare workers. The Rapid Emergency Training Solution (RETS) was self-paced, providing an e-certification of completion based on a minimum score of at least 80%, certified jointly by Save the Children and People to People Health Foundation.

**The German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ)** developed a massive open online course (MOOC) as part of its HBCC project for training school staff in the Philippines and Indonesia.



Photo credit: PSI India



Photo credit: PSI India

## CASE STUDY

### Smartphone Chatbot technology

Throughout the pandemic, e-learning became a crucial source for educational materials. HBCC partners adapted to the online environment with a range of solutions:

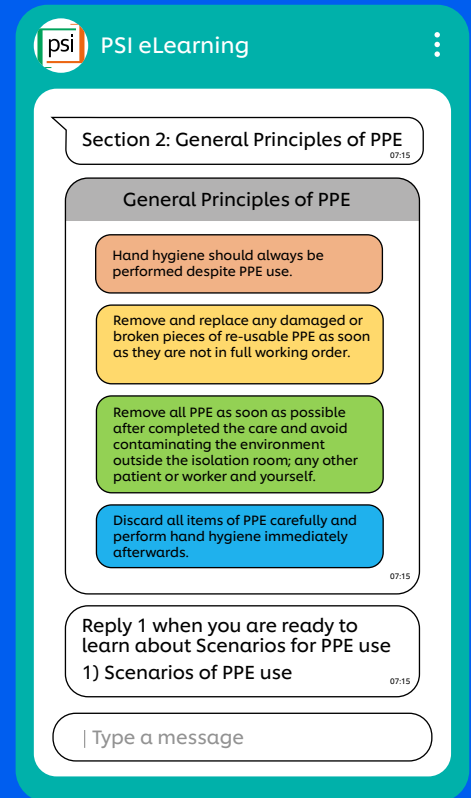
Population Services International (PSI) is a global non-profit organisation dedicated to making it easier for all people to lead healthier lives. As an HBCC partner, PSI created two types of WhatsApp chatbot tools: one for training healthcare workers and the other to track outbreaks of COVID-19.

#### Supporting frontline workers

By collaborating with local health ministers, customised content was developed for use across different operating countries. Aimed at upskilling frontline workers, these courses were delivered through a WhatsApp chat, enabling trainees to follow a flow of conversation, selecting their preferred modules and taking part in quizzes to test their knowledge.

#### Tracking COVID-19 outbreaks

Building on PSI’s existing technology and experience from its malaria case reporting in Vietnam, the organisation adapted its chatbot for COVID-19. Encouraging private health outlets to report possible cases, it built a network for reporting to support local health authorities that were collecting and analysing data to monitor the disease. The team used Zalo, a popular social media message platform in Vietnam, and research from PSI indicated that 97% of users reported symptoms within 48 hours.



### INSIGHT

Accredited by the National Nursing Counsel in Kenya, the WhatsApp eLearning module was impactful, cost effective, scalable and replicable. It allowed a substantial number of healthcare providers to be trained effectively within a short period of time. This will be used by training providers in the future, including current plans for youth services, sexual reproductive health and rights and vaccine hesitancy modules.

# Creating an enabling environment for practising hygiene behaviours

**Sustainable, long-term impact requires an integrated approach. To change behaviour at scale, hygiene promotion and carefully designed behaviour-change materials should coincide with the provision of handwashing facilities, product distribution, and training and education of key workers.**



**1 MILLION LIVES COULD BE SAVED EACH YEAR BY HANDWASHING WITH SOAP**<sup>3</sup>

## Access to hygiene facilities

While improving hygiene is considered a low-cost solution to limiting the spread of transmissible diseases, hygiene facilities are not equally distributed around the world. Reduced water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) service levels are particularly prevalent for those living in challenging contexts. The HBCC focused on this from the start, providing handwashing stations to the communities and people that need them.

The HBCC partners installed, restored, designed practical handwashing facilities in schools, healthcare institutions, public places and refugee camps to give people a functional space to encourage hygienic habits. These solutions were adapted to the location and needs of the communities, from foot- or elbow-operated handwashing stations in Zambia, to solar-powered handwashing dispensers with motion sensors in Uganda.



### INSIGHT

Creating a designated space for handwashing helps change hygiene behaviours. The facilities themselves act as a reminder to wash hands, they make handwashing an easy thing to do and, as a result, forms healthier habits.



### INSIGHT

Programmes and facilities in public places such as schools and healthcare centres enabled campaigns to gather momentum, across wider communities.

## Accessible handwashing stations

### CASE STUDY

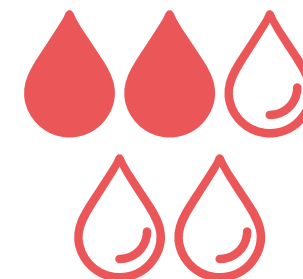
Successfully encouraging change within communities relies on accessibility and inclusivity. While HBCC partners, such as WaterAid and the Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee (BRAC), adapted the design of their handwashing stations to different locations, a great deal of thought was given to the users of these facilities to extend the campaign's reach to children and people with disabilities and mobility issues.

Sink height, ramps and levers were all taken into consideration to develop genuinely accessible solutions. WaterAid worked collaboratively with people living with disabilities to design handwashing stations specifically suited to their needs.

Meanwhile, BRAC installed 1,000 pedal-operated handwashing stations across Bangladesh. One-third of sinks were placed at a height accessible to both children, shorter adults and wheelchair users.



Photo credit: BRAC Bangladesh



**2 IN 5**

**PEOPLE GLOBALLY LACKED ACCESS TO HANDWASHING FACILITIES WITH SOAP AND WATER IN 2019**

<sup>3</sup>Source: London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

## Essential hygiene products

Unilever supported HBCC partners with donations of 78 million hygiene products, freeing up funds for NGOs and UN organisations to invest in other project activities. Eleven HBCC partners distributed high-quality hygiene products in 60 HBCC and non-HBCC countries across six regions, focusing on areas that lack access to essential hygiene products.

This donation from Unilever also included more than 30 million bars of soap given to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). It was the largest one-off donation the organisation has ever received. The speed and scale at which products were distributed was only possible due to Unilever's established global supply chain and support of local partners to get the products into the hands of those who need them most.

### Unilever product donations



**4 MILLION**  
UNITS OF HAND SANITISER



**ENOUGH TO FILL**  
**25,000 BATHS**



**5 MILLION**  
BOTTLES OF DISINFECTANT



**69 MILLION**  
BARS OF SOAP



**THE WEIGHT OF**  
**2000**  
AFRICAN ELEPHANTS

**ENOUGH TO FILL**  
**2**  
OLYMPIC SWIMMING POOLS



Photo credit: UNHCR

## Strengthening capacity through training

Awareness campaigns and access to handwashing facilities and products are not always enough to change behaviours and create lasting habits; education and training is also needed.

While developing skills through training allows for lasting change, by targeting groups such as teachers, government, healthcare and community workers, the HBCC was able to reach more people. For example, local healthcare workers were cited as the top three most trusted information sources on COVID-19, making them well placed to pass on information and teach behaviours, particularly to high-risk groups. By training teachers and school staff, schools were better equipped to re-open safely; and the extension of training to workers and managers in public places ensured COVID-19 prevention and hygiene practices had continued impact outside of the home.

### INSIGHT

#### Product donations work

In partnership with BRAC, the HBCC conducted two randomised control trials, led by the Behavioural Insights Team. The results demonstrated that the donation of soap had an immediate effect on increasing the number of people washing their hands. In fact, the research revealed that hygiene promotion, availability of soap and clear, consistent messaging immediately increased handwashing by 15%.



Photo credit: PSI India

# Reaching the most vulnerable

A key focus of the Hygiene and Behaviour Change Coalition has been to take an inclusive, tailored approach to reach vulnerable and marginalised communities. This includes people living with disabilities, refugees, those living in informal settlements, women and girls, migrant workers, carers and the immune-compromised.

## Providing for people with disabilities

People living with disabilities were identified as more exposed to COVID-19 for several reasons. Underlying health issues and vulnerabilities to the virus was one aspect, but this was worsened by the fact that information and activities were often not accessible or targeted to specific needs. People with mobility issues, such as wheelchair users, require hygiene facilities that are accessible to them. Those who are blind or visually impaired, or people who are deaf or hard of hearing, will need information delivered in specific formats.

The HBCC partners worked to promote inclusivity and accessibility in their programmes, consulting people with disabilities and carers in their planning processes. As a result of taking this inclusive approach the HBCC provided accessible handwashing facilities, tailored information content, activities and training. In Indonesia, for example, SNV adapted the HBCC Password campaign for TV to feature a sign language interpreter. Elsewhere, Water & Sanitation for the Urban Poor (WSUP) and Plan International created posters depicting individuals living with disabilities. This allowed for inclusive representation while highlighting issues unique to people with differing disabilities, such as wheelchair users being particularly exposed to germs from touching the wheels.

**SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES DOESN'T STOP DURING COVID-19.**



**MAKE SURE YOU HELP THEM TO ACCESS WATER AND HYGIENE MATERIALS THEY NEED THROUGH THIS PANDEMIC**



Photo credit: PLAN International



Photo credit: WSUP Kenya

## Supporting the visually impaired

**CASE STUDY**

### White Cane Day in Kenya

In Kenya, WSUP joined the Kenya Society for the Blind to celebrate White Cane Day, a day of celebration to showcase the achievements of people who are blind or visually impaired. During the event, the WSUP team and country representatives held handwashing

education sessions with visually impaired individuals and their caregivers. WSUP also produced radio content on handwashing with soap as part of the White Cane Day campaigns to reach more people.

# Working with refugees

## Equal access for all

Washing hands with soap is one of the best ways to help prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Yet, for millions of refugees worldwide, having access to soap or even clean water is extremely difficult. Many HBCC partners included projects and activities focused specifically on helping to ease these challenges.

### Commitment to communities in need

**CASE STUDY**

UNHCR was one of several partners of the HBCC that tailored their programming to reach refugees and displaced people. Much of their success in communicating with these hard-to-reach populations lay in engaging the refugees themselves in delivering the activities. Volunteers were able to communicate the urgency and importance of changing hygiene behaviour and effect real change in the camps.

One such person was Central African Republic refugee and rap artist Esatis Lebon. He recorded a song to highlight the importance of handwashing. 'Be-Afrika' – which means 'Heart of Africa' in Sango, the national language of the Central African Republic – raised awareness about COVID-19 and how to help stop the spread of the virus and combat misinformation.



I am seeing the community changing. They are changing their hygiene and they are not crowding

**Hana**  
Sudanese refugee and volunteer



**INSIGHT**

Engaging local influencers helped to build acceptance of messaging. Celebrities, political, community and faith leaders, in addition to other influential community members such as healthcare workers, added legitimacy to global hygiene messaging surrounding COVID-19 and cut through cultural and social barriers.

Photo credit: CARE International Jordan

### Sesame Workshop

**CASE STUDY**

#### Equal access for all

Sesame Workshop creates educational media and content designed to help children across the world grow up smarter, stronger and kinder. As part of the HBCC, Sesame Workshop created both child- and parent-facing resources to help curb the spread of COVID-19.

Other HBCC organisations, such as CARE International, used Sesame Workshop's content for their own projects. In Jordan, CARE International shared short videos and messages via WhatsApp groups for refugee mothers in Jordan's Azraq Camp to reach them and their children. The two organisations also collaborated on developing a song for handwashing that was adapted into Arabic and played across radio channels.



Photo credit: UNHCR

## Supporting women and girls

Research has indicated that the health, livelihoods and protection of women and girls are disproportionately affected during times of crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic was no different. Globally, women are disproportionately responsible for unpaid care work, and also hold many frontline roles such as cleaners, service staff, teachers and healthcare workers. This left them at high risk - both of exposure to infection and of jobs being terminated during lockdowns, resulting in loss of income. In addition, lockdowns brought an increase in gender-based violence, with whole families being forced to stay at home.



Cases of gender-based violence have increased [since the start of the pandemic]. We follow up on one case and even before we are done, another comes up

**Maureen Halima**, secretary of the Sauti Ya Wanawake women's movement in Kilifi County on Kenya's southern coast.



The HBCC partners ran targeted project activities to empower and educate women within their community settings, offered training sessions to improve skills and provide employment and income opportunities, and worked with men to change perceptions. For example, in Nepal, WaterAid hosted training sessions for underprivileged women to teach them to make hygiene products such as face masks. In addition to supporting the women themselves these sessions also increased the availability of essential hygiene tools during the pandemic.



Photo credit: WaterAid Nepal



Photo credit: ActionAid Kenya

### Sauti Ya Wanawake women's network

CASE STUDY

#### Empowering and educating to improve lives

In Kenya, HBCC partner ActionAid worked with local women's movement Sauti Ya Wanawake to address issues faced by women during the pandemic. Volunteers Maureen and Hilda have been spreading COVID-19 awareness messages. Taking part in roadshows in major centres across the country, Hilda and Maureen have demonstrated behaviours such as handwashing with soap and coughing into tissues, emphasising the need for social distancing, and reminding people of virus

symptoms and to avoid shaking hands.

Prior to the establishment of the Sauti Ya Wanawake network, women in the local community were undermined and barred from participating in family decision-making. However, since the roadshow women reported feeling more empowered and that their situations were improving.

# Looking to the future

## The value of public-private partnerships

Public-private collaboration enabled the Hygiene and Behaviour Change Coalition to rapidly and effectively deliver a large-scale emergency response. The model of leveraging private sector resources and expertise with UK funding and diplomatic support proved a winning combination.

This, teamed with effective research on barriers and motivators to behaviour change led by The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) and the HBCC's partners, ensured that appropriate strategies were established in a very short time frame and adapted to meet evolving needs.

The HBCC's collaboration of 21 UN and NGO partners has built stronger working relationships and brought positive change during a time of international crisis. Acting as a bridge between public and private companies, the HBCC has coordinated partners' efforts and expertise to deliver impressive results.



### INSIGHT

#### Why collaboration is vital to ensure lasting impact

With the sustainability of handwashing practices in mind, the HBCC partners worked closely with local and national governments, organisations, institutions and communities to build capacity where possible and embed projects into local systems and long-term programmes. By doing this, the impact of the HBCC can live on long after the programme itself ends.



# Raising the profile of handwashing for lasting change

While the COVID-19 pandemic put hygiene inequalities on top of the global agenda, the HBCC raised the global profile of handwashing with soap. The profile of the HBCC and its speed of delivery helped to showcase the need for adequate water, sanitation and hygiene, and demonstrated solutions.



Photo credit: Aga Khan Foundation India



Photo credit: PSI India

## Global Handwashing Day

### CASE STUDY

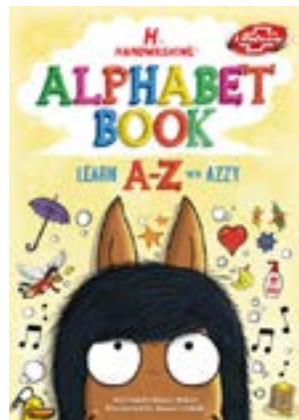
On October 15th every year people from across the world come together to mark Global Handwashing Day (GHD), a day dedicated to handwashing with soap. The aim is to bring attention to handwashing with soap as an easy, effective and affordable way to prevent disease and save lives.

GHD was first established in 2008 to raise awareness of the importance of handwashing with soap, but the COVID-19 outbreak made this day even more important in 2020. The HBCC came together to capitalise on this moment to raise awareness, working together to advocate on the importance of sustaining hygiene measures to tackle COVID-19.

## H for Handwashing

Lifebuoy, Unilever’s leading health soap brand, used its marketing expertise to develop the **#HforHandwashing** campaign, a public-facing initiative that the HBCC members could use to promote the importance of incorporating handwashing education from an early age and encourage a lifelong positive habit.

By changing the association of the letter ‘H’ in the alphabet from ‘Hat’ to ‘Handwashing’ Lifebuoy found a playful and impactful way to engage children. The campaign was shared with HBCC partners, who amplified the message through their social media and used it to underpin advocacy at a local level, with events held with local decision-makers, live demonstrations and parliamentary events.



## Calls to action

### Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Disease prevention, future pandemic preparedness and climate change are making the provision of universal hand hygiene more critical than ever. And, according to the United Nations<sup>4</sup>, meeting drinking water, sanitation and hygiene targets by 2030 requires a four-fold increase in the pace of progress. It must become our global priority to do more, and the HBCC has demonstrated that when we work together, we can create impactful, positive change. Public and private sector, NGOs, academics and civil society all play a vital role in how we prepare for the next global health crisis, building a more resilient future for all and responding through collective action.



**ENSURE AVAILABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL**



PSI India

<sup>4</sup>Goal 6 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs (un.org)



We must not sink back into complacency as the pandemic retreats. Acting decisively now, while hand hygiene is foremost in everyone's minds, is in our global collective interest and is our global collective duty.

**Rebecca Marmot**  
Chief Sustainability Officer, Unilever



### Three steps to keep UN SDG 6 on track

#### A watershed moment for global health decision-makers

Together we can ensure that within 10 years, every single person on our planet can perform one of the simplest lifesaving acts, and that no child dies because of lack of access to water, sanitation and hygiene. We are asking the global community to take the following steps and achieve this crucial target.

- 1** Make and publish costed plans with clear deadlines: The adoption of costed national plans for water, sanitation and hygiene will ensure plans and finance go hand in hand. This will galvanise support and spur effective interventions.
- 2** Financial investment: Governments, donor agencies and local funding allocators must prioritise their investment in hand hygiene services and behaviour change around the world. NGOs must prioritise these activities, providing the expenses and support that will enable further investment, in particular to households, schools and healthcare settings.
- 3** Partnerships: More ground-breaking collaborations are urgently needed across the public and private sector, NGOs, academics and civil society organisations. By collaborating across sectors, we can pool our expertise and resources to great effect.



BBC Media Action Somalia

### The HBCC continues...

In early 2022 Unilever and the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office extended the HBCC with additional grant funding in response to Omicron and other new COVID-19 variants. This second round of the HBCC is designed to support preparedness for future health-related outbreaks by strengthening local capacity. Working with fewer partners across 18 countries the programme also combines measures to tackle vaccine hesitancy and encourage vaccine uptake where appropriate.

**For future updates visit**  
**[unilever.com](https://unilever.com)**