

42nd WEDC International Conference

ONLINE: 13 – 15 September, 2021

EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE WASH SERVICES:
FUTURE CHALLENGES IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD

**Innovative hygiene promotion campaign:
Use of theatre performance to promote local handwashing
stations construction, Niger**

M. Dunka Rabiou & F. Flachenberg

Niger

REFERENCE NO. 3338

Background

Handwashing with soap is the most efficient measure to prevent diarrheal diseases and its adoptions is a crucial public health issue. Thus, Knowledge Behaviour gap is too often the results of standards hygiene promotion approaches¹. In Niger, Tahoua region, Concern has piloted a new approach based on the main lessons learned and recommendations from international Behaviour Change experts: “Insights” were collected at community level to serve as a basis for elaborating scripts for short theatre sketches performed in front of crowds, followed by support activities to put into practices the handwashing behaviour promoted during the drama sessions. Results are positives with numerous handwashing stations built (>3000).

Issues

In 2018, despite years of hygiene promotion activities(PHAST), a slow uptake of handwashing with soap practices were observed in the area of intervention. Evaluation showed increased knowledge of the main critical times for handwashing with soap but adoption of handwashing practices remained low.

Response

Following a training on Social Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC), a new set of activities was elaborated to answer the challenges aforementioned. The approach piloted between 2018 and 2020 is composed of four steps:

- **Step 1:** Barrier Analysis were conducting to identify the main and specific drivers and barriers towards the adoption of handwashing with soap in the different intervention sites.
- **Step 2:** These insights have been turn into a short theatre scripts by a professional theatre company. TheScripts aimed at triggering an emotional reaction (laugh, disgust, etc.).
- **Step 3:** Handwashing stations construction workshop (tippy taps) were proposed after the theatre performance.
- **Step 4:** Regular follow-up were conducted after the initial triggering session (at least once every two weeks during the first two months).



**Photographs: Examples of handwashing stations built following the intervention
(copyright: M.Dunka Raviou)**

Outcome

3678 handwashing stations were built in 31 communities.

Lessons learned

Entertaining Hygiene promotion sketches were highly appreciated by the communities and much more efficient than the usual hygiene messaging on handwashing with soap. Only local actors can find the catchy sentences and situations that are going to make people laugh and react. There is not standardised approach possible (even if it can be adapted from existing scenarios like the good/bad character).

The Small Doable Action (SDA) approach is a key complement to any hygiene promotion campaign: Supporting people to put into practice the behaviour promoted through training workshops, demonstration stands, hands-on exercises allowed for taking advantage of the momentum created by the theatre performance and is often the crucial step that trigger the decision to “do something”. It is therefore vital to plan it just after the demand for handwashing stations has been levered up by the HP sessions.

Competition with rewards clearly boosted the motivation for constructing handwashing stations. It is important to choose a reward that is attractive. For instance, choosing to offer a mobile phone over a stock of soap bars.

M&E based on direct observation is key to be able to differentiate between results from standards approaches and innovative ones: if the M&E plan had been only relying on selfreporting, the positive effect of the pilot could not have been demonstrated.

References

- Rajiv N. Rimal, 2000. “Closing the Knowledge-Behavior Gap in Health Promotion: The Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy”: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/12381659_Closing_the_Knowledge-Behavior_Gap_in_Health_Promotion_The_Mediating_Role_of_Self-Efficacy
- Fewtrell, 2000. “Water, sanitation, and hygiene interventions to reduce diarrhoea in less developed countries: A systematic review and meta-analysis”: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/8109278_Water_sanitation_and_hygiene_interventions_to_reduce_diarrhoea_in_less_developed_countries_A_systematic_review_and_meta-analysis

Contact details

Marie Dunka Raviou is a WASH Specialist and is currently working with Concern Worldwide in Niger. Franck Flachenberg is Concern’s Senior WASH Advisor, based in the Strategy, Advocacy and Learning Directorate at Concern’s Headquarters.

Marie Dunka Raviou: Email: marie.raviou@concern.net
Franck Flachenberg: Email: franck.flachenberg@concern.net
Website: <http://www.concern.net>