

Some municipalities will launch environmental campaigns asking families to gather plastic garbage and exchange it for a HW and soap device.



► A promotional activity led by a street theater group.

HW

Handwashing Series

Lessons and reflections from the field

PERU
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... Reaching the Most

In the course of capacity building and promotional activities, a street theater group in the north of Peru developed a character that is now called “Super Jaboncin”, a sort of anti-hero that comes to the rescue in the quest to eliminate bacteria causing diarrhea. This character is currently in the process of becoming a comic strip, to promote the use of soap when washing hands, and the use of the soap dispenser also known by the same name.

“Super Jaboncin” will become the center of the 2009-2010 campaign.

Schools, local municipalities, and health networks will have a leading role in promoting its use. Health promoters and university volunteers will remind and make a follow-up of its use in door-to-door visits. Furthermore, behavioral change will be measured at home and in schools.

Fábrica de Ideas



A SIMPLE IDEA, A GREAT SOLUTION

It all started with a plastic bottle with a straw inserted at the bottom. This easy-to-make, reusable, inexpensive device can significantly increase handwashing with soap in homes and schools across the country, therefore contributing to the reduction of diarrhea in children. A partnership with the private sector has transformed it into an accessible tool for mass consumption and propelled it as the key element of a nationwide campaign.



A Useful Tool

“I put the bottle with water by the kitchen, so I am reminded that I must wash before cooking –also the children remember to wash before eating their dinner”, humbly expressed a woman, while sharing her experiences with mothers participating at a workshop in rural Ica (on the Peruvian Southwest). The idea targeted two well-known barriers: (1) to put water aside for handwashing (availability), and (2) to have a constant reminder to wash (behavior). The itinerant workshop facilitator made this “HW device” a key element of his training materials, and shared it with women in several regions of the country, always with great acceptance.



In Peru, the HW Initiative is a nationwide program led by the Ministries of Health and Education; a partnership of public and private institutions engaged in the process of behavioral change aiming to improve poor families' quality of life and focused on contributing to strengthen children capacities to become productive adults. The HWI is coordinated by WSP.



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SO, IS SOAP OF ANY RELEVANCE?

A definite YES is the answer.

• **17%** of bacteria reduction* in children's stools is achieved in homes with water and soap for handwashing.

• **16%** more family members report washing their hands when there is a place assigned with water and soap available.

• **\$0.66** is the estimated cost of the dispenser to the families and schools*.

• **1/3** of the production cost will be financed by public, private and project funding.

• **2,000** schools and 15,000 households (430,000 children and women) will be benefitted by the use of the dispenser.



Setting the Goal

In early 2008, study results¹ showed very clearly that the absence of soap was a key barrier for the adoption of the practice, and that it seldom could be found readily available at households or schools. Even in the schools that provided it, it did not last very long.

On the other hand, a previous study had shown that 99% of homes in Peru had soap². What it did not indicate, however, was that mothers normally hid soap to avoid it to be wasted by children, so they had no access to soap and washed with water, when—or if—they did.

More striking about the same study was that it showed that **in homes where there was a place with water and soap for handwashing, there was 17% less bacteria in children stools.** A strong case that proved there was a solid linkage between soap and health, once again.

With this evidence we moved into the next step: How could we transform the popular HW device into a soap dispenser, and turn it into a mass consumption and accessible device, readily available in schools, health centers and homes?

A Private Partner Steps In

Duraplast, a large firm in the plastic industry, was approached with the odd request. The firm has a social responsibility division and became interested with the possibility of providing a solution that could have a great impact on children's health nationwide. They immediately started working on the design of an industrial solution that would meet the challenge.

A couple of months later they had designed a recycled-plastic device that would hold two 3-liter plastic bottles with "sport" lids. A home recipe of liquid soap was developed: ¼ of a bar of soap diluted in 3 liters of hot water to fill one of the bottles. The other bottle would provide the water.

Testing and Results

Some prototypes were produced and tested in schools and homes in rural areas of the coastal and Andean regions of Peru with encouraging results: the device worked, it was well appreciated, and **handwashing with soap increased roughly 30% in schools**³.

Testing also showed that a bottle of liquid soap would last three weeks in a household with five family members⁴.

Creating a Strategy

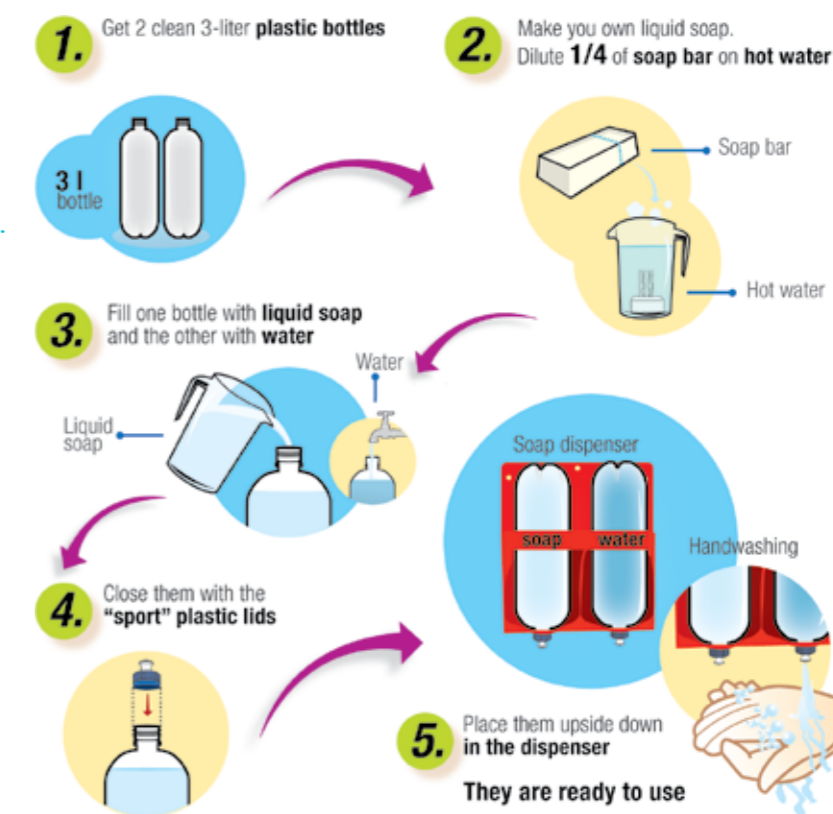
Next was to determine the amounts of devices the program was capable of producing and then distributing across the country. Also a strategy had to be designed to promote its use at home and in schools. It was decided that the device should not be given away for free, but should imply a cost to the families, even if paid in kind.

A national strategy has been implemented to raise awareness of the need "to put soap in place" at home and in schools if "we want to make a difference" on the fight against malnutrition in Peru. Partners are invited to join in each region to align resources and increase the efficiency of social programs. Regional authorities welcome the support as local partnerships emerge.

As a result of this effort, **enough funds have been raised to produce the first batch of 100,000 units by July 2009.** A similar amount is expected to be produced by March 2010. ●●●

Clear as Water

How to make a HW dispenser.



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¹ IMASEN. Comunicación y Desarrollo Social. Estudio cualitativo sobre lavado de manos [Qualitative Study on Handwashing]. Lima: December 2007.

² AB PRISMA. Estudio de comportamiento sobre la práctica de lavado de manos con jabón en el Perú [Behavioral Study on the Practice of Handwashing with Soap in Peru]. Lima: 2003.

³ Handwashing Initiative. Validación de dispensadores de agua y jabón [Validation of water and soap dispensers]. 2009.

⁴ Handwashing Initiative. Validación de dispensadores de agua y jabón [Validation of water and soap dispensers]. 2009.

⁵ IMASEN Comunicación y Desarrollo Social. Encuesta línea de base en hogares, Iniciativa Lavado de Manos. [Baseline Poll in Households, Handwashing Initiative]. Lima: August 2008.