The Water and Sanitation Program’s Global Scaling Up Handwashing Project aims to learn what works to stimulate and sustain behavior change at scale and have an impact on health. Working with government and non-governmental partners, WSP is addressing key knowledge gaps in the area of hygiene improvement. We aim to generate and sustain handwashing with soap practice of 5.4 million women and primary-school aged children in Peru, Senegal, Tanzania, and Vietnam.

Each year nearly two million young children in the developing world die from diarrheal diseases. **Handwashing with soap is one of the most cost-effective ways to prevent diarrhea.** For only US$3, hygiene promotion offers one year of life free of disability.¹

### Knowledge to Date

| **Handwashing with soap, promoted through intensive and small-scale interventions, can stimulate handwashing with soap behavior change and prevent diarrheal diseases.** |

| **Medicalized, didactic education approaches are not adequate to change behavior.** |

| **Hygiene related investments in water and sanitation—especially hardware—are often not sustained.** |

### Key Knowledge Gaps

| **What is the impact of large-scale interventions on behavior change and health?** |

| **Are consumer-focused social marketing approaches more effective at stimulating and sustaining handwashing with soap behavior change?** |

| **What investments and resources help sustain the promotion and practice of handwashing with soap?** |

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¹ US$ per Disability Adjusted Life Year (DALY) averted

- **Hygiene promotion (e.g., handwashing with soap):** $3
- **Water supply through hand pump:** $97
- **Breastfeeding promotion:** $850
- **Cholera immunization:** $2,750

**wsp.org/scalinguphandwashing**
About the Project. Even though handwashing with soap is considered an important measure in preventing diarrheal diseases, handwashing rates remain low. In an eleven-country review, on average, less than one in five people reported washing their hands with soap after using the toilet².

That’s why WSP’s Global Scaling Up Handwashing Project is focused on applying innovative promotional approaches to generate widespread and sustained improvement in handwashing with soap practice.

Promotion. To scale up promotion, the project is using integrated, multiple communication channels to reach mothers and children. So far:

- 40.7 million women and children have been exposed to key messages through mass media such as TV and radio.
- 380,000 people have attended community events that blend education and entertainment.
- 2.3 million people have been reached through face-to-face exchanges between trained community-based workers and mothers/caretakers.

Partnerships. WSP teams are working with national and local governments, the private sector and non-governmental organizations to leverage existing networks to rapidly scale up reach. For example, in Vietnam, the project is partnering with the Women’s Union, a 13-million-strong organization with a presence in every village. In Senegal, community-based organizations are promoting handwashing with soap through existing networks of outreach workers. In Peru, a partnership with the Ministry of Education to improve hygiene has reached over 75,000 children, trained 10,300 teachers, and installed 29,000 handwashing stations in schools.

WSP’s support to integrate handwashing with soap in numerous World Bank-financed investment projects in water supply, sanitation, health, and nutrition in Latin America, Africa, and East Asia has also facilitated scaling up and replication of handwashing promotion.

Sustainability. To be effective over the long term, behavior change must be sustained. That’s why WSP is working to mainstream handwashing promotion into existing public and private sector initiatives; build institutional capacity; support the integration of hygiene improvement into national and local policies and strategies; and support the development of enabling technologies such as handwashing stations that respond to the demands of consumers.

Impact. To learn what works, WSP is conducting coordinated, community-randomized, controlled trials to evaluate project impacts on health, child development, and the economic welfare of households. The costs and the value of these diverse benefits will also be determined. To date, baseline surveys have been completed and endline surveys are pending.

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CLEAN HANDS, HEALTHY CHILDREN

WSP is a multi-donor partnership created in 1978 and administered by the World Bank to support poor people in obtaining affordable, safe, and sustainable access to water and sanitation services. WSP’s donors include Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, and the World Bank.