Enabling Products
The learning objectives include understanding:

- the role of access and availability to soap and water for handwashing,
- what is meant by enabling products, findings from the design of a HW station in Vietnam,
- the potential role of enabling products in habit formation in handwashing programs, and
- finally how WSP integrated enabling products in the Global Scaling Up Handwashing Project.
Easy access and availability to soap and water, when and where needed, is important for handwashing to take place. While research shows that most households have some form of soap agent, soap and water are not always conveniently located. If a busy mother needs to look for soap and water after exiting the latrine, or before handling food, she will be less likely to wash her hands with soap.

In the FOAM framework developed by WSP, access and availability are categorized under Opportunity. For more information on the FOAM framework, see the FOAM presentation, and related resources included in this module.
How can opportunity be increased? One way is through enabling products. In general, enabling products are products that increase the opportunity to use another product or to adopt a behavior.

Think of pill dispensers, for example. These small containers sort and store prescription pills by day of the week, or time of day. They are designed to help people adhere to a treatment plan. Another example is a single-injection syringe, which is designed to prevent the reuse of needles.
Enabling products for HWWS can play several roles to facilitate handwashing with soap. For example, an emptied ballpoint pen can help regulate water flow from an inverted plastic bottle.

This, of course, is often critical in resource-scarce settings.

Or, a “soap on a rope” can manage soap so that it's not wasted, misplaced, or stolen.

Enabling products can also bring soap and water together in one place, forming a handwashing station. A common do-it-yourself example is the tippy-tap, which is made of a jerry can, but there are also mass-produced HW stations.

WSP has catalogued over 60 enabling products. (wsp.org/scalinguphandwashing/enablingtechnologies ). Please consult this database and help us grow it if you know of other products out there!
Design is a critical component for any product, including enabling products. In 2009, WSP contracted a consultant who specializes in human-centered design. Human-centered design is based on user preferences, needs, and experience.

The consultant applied human-centered design to develop rough designs for a HW station for use by rural Vietnamese households and that could be potentially commercially produced and distributed.

The lessons from the consultancy were many. And I will now share a few of the more salient ones. Our findings suggest that a universal HW station design may not be possible. In the course of the field testing, participants were shown a picture of a mass produced dispenser used in Peru. This dispenser holds recycled soda bottles filled with soapy water and water. While this design is popular in Peru, it tested poorly in rural Vietnam, where respondents commented that they did not like the “used” appearance and that if a HW station were visible in their courtyard, then it would need to look attractive and new.

The field-testing also revealed that the mechanics of HWWS may be more complex than initially thought. For example, in rural Vietnam prefer to bend over when washing their hands which would rule out a HW station on a stand.
Participants spontaneously said that a HW station would remind them to wash their hands with soap, something that we will get back to shortly.
Designs for a HW station in Vietnam were finalized in 2010 thanks to WaterSHED Asia, a global development alliance funded by USAID, which built on initial concepts. Commercialization opportunities for the Happy Tap, as it's now called, are being explored.
Now let's talk about the potential role of enabling products in facilitating habit formation. HWWS programs strive to instill the HW as a habit among members of the target population. The aim is for the practice to continue even after program inputs stop.

Studies by Verplanken and Wood, leading researchers on habit formation, have found that for habit to form the behavior needs to be repeated in a stable context.

In handwashing, this stable context can be provided by a sink, or in areas without piped water, by a handwashing station, or some other enabling product.
Verplanken & Wood further suggest that although a behavior is initially conscious and intentional, it can become automatic if it is repeated in a stable context, eventually the behavior becomes unconscious and is triggered by environmental cues.

This is another reason why enabling products such as handwashing stations may be critical in fostering good habits: they provide reminders and environmental cues to action.

A mother exiting a latrine is reminded to wash her hands with soap when she sees a handwashing station.

As mentioned earlier, research conducted by WSP in Vietnam shows the potential role for handwashing stations to serve as a cue to action. WSP has uncovered similar findings in focus group discussions in Tanzania and a case study on tippy-taps in Uganda.
So, what are the implications for handwashing with soap promotion?

Enabling products can play a critical role in facilitating easy access to soap and water when needed. They have a potential role in providing a stable context and environmental cue, and that they should be part of a HWWS promotion initiative in addition to behavior change communication.

However, enabling products must be user-responsive, as underscored by WSP’s research in rural Vietnam.
How did WSP incorporate enabling products within the Global Scaling Up HWWS Project?

In Tanzania, the behavior change communication component was used to strengthen household members’ skills to build a tippy-tap.

Front-line activators distributed a comic strip to mothers on how to construct a tippy-tap.

Direct consumer contact events also demonstrated to audience members on how to build a tippy-tap.

Wall murals and other visuals for the “Ahsante Mama” or “Thank you Mother” campaign also depicted mothers and their children using a tippy-tap.
In Peru, the handwashing initiative partnered with a local plastics manufacturer to develop the Super Jabocin handwashing station. Made from recycled plastic, Super Jabocin holds two 3-liter soda bottles which are common found in Peru, and attached to the wall. One bottle is meant to hold water and the other is meant to hold a homemade soapy water solution.

As of 2011, around 80,000 units of the Super Jaboncin handwashing station have been produced for distribution in schools and to households through some partners.

In areas where Super Jaboncin is not available, partners conducting outreach showed households how to build a do-it-yourself artisanal version using local materials.
In Senegal, interpersonal communications focused on helping mothers think through how they could better manage soap in the household to ensure it is readily available when needed.

A mobile plastic HW station was also featured in campaign visuals, such as in this billboard. And a limited number of such HW stations were given away as promotional items though front-line workers.

The implementation team also met with the various Ministries on how to scale up the availability of user-responsive HW stations.
In Vietnam, where motivators from the Women’s Union met with mothers at home. One of the topics discussed was where best to place soap and water in the house.
Enabling products can also be used to promote handwashing with soap within a sanitation initiative. HWWS enabling products can be included in the supply strengthening component. In Tanzania, WSP trained masons on how to build tippy-taps, in addition to making and selling sanitation slabs. Enabling products could also be included in the sanitation promotion component. For example, a handwashing station could be positioned as a feature as integral as a shelter.
This completes the presentation. You'll find Key Terms, tips to Keep in Mind, and additional tools and resources within this module.