Global Scaling Up Handwashing Project

Developing a Decentralized Performance Monitoring System in Senegal

October 2011

INTRODUCTION
Since 2007, WSP has been supporting the Government of Senegal to implement a behavior change project to scale up handwashing with soap.1 The project design centers on a research-based integrated communications program that includes mass media at national and local levels, including radio, television, and billboards; community promotional events, also called direct consumer contact (DCC), and interpersonal communications (IPC).2 Activities were implemented in almost eighty communities in the regions of Dakar, Diourbel, Fatick, Kaolack, Louga, Thies, Ziguinchor, and Saint Louis, with an aim to reach 1.5 million people (targeting mothers of children under the age of five, and school children ages five to 13), ultimately improving the handwashing behavior of 500,000 people.

PROBLEM STATEMENT
Performance monitoring is critical to ensure that project activities are delivered with high quality and on schedule. In addition, monitoring provides evidence to assess what is working or when programming needs to be adjusted. Smaller scale projects may be able to monitor activities through a limited number of partners or contracted agencies. However, a large scale implementation that uses a more decentralized approach and involves numerous implementation agencies requires a robust, systematic performance monitoring system capable of managing a large volume of data. For example, to implement the project, WSP contracted four firms to implement IPC, two firms to implement DCC, and one firm to implement mass media. In addition, IPC firms subcontracted around 50 local organizations to support activities, and these firms managed around 150 community workers.

The challenge was to develop a performance monitoring system or monitoring information system (MIS) that standardized reporting among all implementing firms and provided reliable and timely performance data to support learning, programmatic improvements, and advocacy. Figure 1 shows a schematic of the overall data collection process, including reporting and supervision.

ACTION
Designing Monitoring & Evaluation Tools
As a first step, the project team hired an MIS consultant and reviewed the project objectives, components, and implementation arrangements. Based on these factors, the team developed two standardized, paper-based reporting forms (chosen because of their affordability and the amount of information requested), one to report promotional DCC events such as road shows, and one to report IPC activities such as focus groups, household visits, and one-on-one outreach. A draft of these forms was shared with two DCC and four IPC agencies for comments and an orientation meeting was held to outline the rationale and to share the design.

Once the reporting form was finalized, a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) specialist with the necessary computer skills was hired to build an electronic database in Microsoft Access™. This software was chosen because it is relatively easy to use and is widely available, and because data can be easily transferred into Microsoft Excel™ for analysis. Illustration 1 shows an example of a data entry screen.

MIS Training and Pilot Test
After the initial design phase, WSP held a one-day orientation session for M&E specialists and data operators from the implementing agencies. Data operators were primarily professionals with experience entering data.

Key findings
• Performance monitoring can be used collaboratively to strengthen team efforts, supporting a consensus review and adjustment of activities based on field evidence.
• Involving implementing firms from the beginning is recommended to support uptake and increase understanding around the necessity to collect high-quality data.
• A management information system can be decentralized and understood at any level if all actors are trained and relevant tools are shared.
• The agency that is ultimately responsible for the project should organize an independent team to supervise implementing agencies and conduct field visits to ensure that data are of high quality and can be shared.

1 In Senegal, the project built on the work of Global Public-Private Partnership for Handwashing with Soap (PPPHW). For more information, see www.globalhandwashing.org.
The team reviewed the kind of information to record, how the information could be used to improve implementation, the quality assurance process, the reporting forms, and how to use the Access™ database. The database was installed on the agencies’ computers for a three-month pilot to test functionality, with the result that some phrases were revised on the paper forms to improve clarification.

**Reporting and Validation Process**

The reporting process required six steps:

1. Fieldworkers contracted by agencies used the forms to report on DCC road shows and IPC activities such as household visits and focus group discussions (see Illustration 2).
2. Reporting forms were submitted by fieldworkers to their supervisors for internal quality control and validation.
3. Validated forms were sent to the M&E units of the implementation agencies for a second round of quality control and validation prior to data entry.
4. At the end of each month, the database was copied onto a CD and sent to WSP’s M&E specialist for quality control and forms were accepted or rejected. In case of rejection, the same activity is repeated and another form issued properly.
5. WSP’s M&E specialist produced an Objectives, Achievements, Gaps, and Performance (OAGP) table (see Table 1) to highlight trends and results.

**Illustration 1: Data Entry Screen**
Table 1: Objectives, Achievements, Gaps, and Performance (July 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementing Agency</th>
<th>Objectives (Projections)</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
<th>Gaps</th>
<th>Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APAPS</td>
<td>4,167</td>
<td>1,250</td>
<td>6,827</td>
<td>3,129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDE</td>
<td>1,806</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>2,431</td>
<td>1,129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SENAGROSOL</td>
<td>5,058</td>
<td>1,871</td>
<td>4,766</td>
<td>1,641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMC</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6,188</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>5,871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11,031</td>
<td>9,613</td>
<td>14,075</td>
<td>11,770</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Women in the study were ages 15–49 years, and children were ages 5–13. During the study period, HMC had not yet planned DCC events targeting women.

6. The task manager and M&E specialist analyzed the OAGP table, and shared updates with the broader management team, including implementing agencies. During the meeting, the team worked to identify the qualitative explanation for positive or negative results and identified strategies to address shortcomings.

WSP Supervision

Quality of data is critical to ensure that agencies’ reports are consistent with and accurately reflect the field work. For example, through quality control, it became apparent that in some urban neighborhoods fieldworkers were completing forms without making household visits because people were not as open to house visits.

On a bimonthly basis, a team of four WSP supervisors with experience in social marketing and/or behavior change, social project activities, and familiarity with local languages and the project intervention areas reviewed a randomized set of reports, conducted a week-long field visit to households as follow-up to IPC activities, and produced a summary report of findings. This report was presented during a monthly management meeting between agencies and the WSP team.

During the field visits, supervisors visited households reported to have received visits by fieldworkers to verify what was reported, the quality of discussion, issues discussed (for example, handwashing with soap at critical junctures, availability of products, advantages of practicing handwashing, or commitment to set up a handwashing device), and the behavior of the household regarding handwashing since the previous household visit. Supervisors submitted a mission report and reporting forms to the M&E specialist to validate, and any form presenting unclear information was eliminated. After the data was recorded in the database, a consolidated supervision report was prepared, reviewed, and discussed with the implementation agencies during monthly meetings. A total of five missions were completed, including supervision of more than 500 household visits.

Monitoring Mass Media

A specialized agency was hired to monitor the broadcast of television and radio spots, comparing actual placements to the media plan. Each morning, an email confirming placements was sent to WSP and the communication agency. In the event of discrepancies, WSP contacted the media placement agency to understand the issues and formulate a strategy to make up any gaps. Overall, large stations in urban areas closely followed the media plan. The only noticeable gap was when WALF, a radio/TV station, missed some broadcasts when they moved locations.

A different strategy was used to monitor around a dozen local radio stations that had very limited coverage. In these instances records of broadcasts paid by WSP were obtained. In addition, fieldworkers provided inputs about actual placements without any formal duty about monitoring of the placement.

The implementation of billboards was monitored through photos sent after the billboard was installed. Fieldworkers and supervisors also reported on displays.

Illustration 2: Sample of a Completed IPC Form
Further, as the project transitioned from Phase I to Phase II, WSP’s task manager conducted a field visit to two regions to meet grassroots partners hired by implementation firms or national non-governmental organizations to better understand which activities were successful and what challenges were faced, including how to work more effectively given time and budget constraints.

Key lessons from the field visit included recognition of the importance of including men as a target audience; confirmation that the handwashing game was the preferred communication material; and confirmation that household visits were more efficient than focus groups for reaching a large number of people. These insights were verified in the database and led to several subsequent actions, including a learning session for managers of implementing firms and fieldworkers to target men (fathers, husbands, school teachers, etc.) in campaign-related media and activities, and revising mass media, DCC, and IPC strategies (including the handwashing game, M&E forms, television and radio spots, billboard, and slogan) to include men as a target audience.

RESULTS

- WSP developed a functional MIS that met challenging requirements, including rigorous quality control, the ability to operate in a decentralized system, and the ability to support a large volume of data from multiple sources.
- Decentralization of the MIS required some capacity building for the implementing agencies to familiarize them with the handwashing application. Firms have now gained experience on aspects such as transfer of data from Access™ to Excel™, codification of the area of intervention, codification of fieldworkers, and codification of activities.
- The established MIS was able to operate in a decentralized context at large scale.
- Ongoing reporting and data analysis has helped the team manage activities in real time, identifying what works and areas to strengthen.
- The database has been recognized by public sector organizations (AGETIP for implementation of the Global Sanitation Fund in Senegal and the Municipality of Dakar) as a model and WSP has been approached with requests for technical consultation.

KEY LEARNINGS

- Performance monitoring can be used collaboratively to strengthen team efforts, supporting a consensual review and adjustment of activities based on field evidence.
- Involving implementing firms from the beginning is recommended to support uptake and to increase understanding about the necessity of collecting high-quality data.
- An MIS can be decentralized and understood at any level if all actors are trained and relevant tools are shared.
- The agency that is ultimately responsible for the project should organize an independent team to supervise implementing agencies and conduct field visits to ensure that data are of high quality and can be shared.

WHAT ELSE DO WE NEED TO KNOW?

- How can supervision of an MIS be adapted to overcome challenging conditions such as poor transportation or lack of precise home addresses in rural areas?
- Is it possible to manage a large volume of data without an electronic database?
- What adaptations are needed to support partners working in different sectors such as medical, public administration, nutrition, or hygiene who are requesting technical assistance to adopt this M&E approach?

—By Seydou Nourou Koita

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About the project

Global Scaling Up Handwashing is a Water and Sanitation (WSP) project focused on applying innovative behavior change approaches to improve handwashing with soap behavior among women of reproductive age (ages 15–49) and primary school-age children (ages 5–9). It is being implemented by local and national governments with technical support from WSP in four countries: Peru, Senegal, Tanzania, and Vietnam. For more information, please visit www.wsp.org/scalinguphandwashing.

Contact us

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