



## Environment

### Water Community


[Logout](#)
[My Communities](#)

Login: India Water Portal

#### Solution Exchange: An Initiative of the UN Country Team in India


[Search](#)

[se-wes](#) » **[se-watr] CONSOLIDATED REPLY: Role of Self Help Groups in promoting Hand Washing - Experiences; Referrals**



[se-watr] CONSOLIDATED REPLY: Role of Self Help Groups in promoting Hand Washing - Thu, 09 December 2010 12:44  
Experiences; Referrals [message #48083]

Nitya Jacob

You can download the PDF version of this consolidated reply from [ftp://ftp.solutionexchange.net.in/public/wes/cr/cr-se-wes-12\\_101001.pdf](ftp://ftp.solutionexchange.net.in/public/wes/cr/cr-se-wes-12_101001.pdf) (PDF; Size: 149KB)



## Environment

### Water Community



## Solution Exchange for the Water Community Consolidated Reply

**Query: Role of Self Help Groups in promoting Hand Washing - Experiences; Referrals**

Compiled by [Nitya Jacob](#), Resource Person and [Sunetra Lala](#), Research Associate

Issue Date: 9 December 2010

From [Adam Talsma](#), People's Action for Clean Hands (PANCH), Agra

Posted 12 November 2010

I work for People's Action for Clean Hands (PANCH) in Agra, Uttar Pradesh. We are working on a pilot hand washing project funded by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, USA.

PANCH (temporary website available at <http://web.mit.edu/panch/index.html>) has designed a training programme and a set of low-cost technologies to facilitate slum-dwelling women's Self Help Groups (SHGs) to design, produce and sell their own hand washing solutions. The year-long pilot will be launched in December 2010 in partnership with the local NGO, Shri Nirotilal Buddha Sansthan (SNBS).

PANCH is focusing on using hand washing design as a way of giving local people the space, tools, time, and financial support needed to develop their own solutions for their own reality. The end of the pilot will be an awards ceremony in which the most promising hand washing solutions developed will be awarded support to start their own small businesses around their products.

PANCH is looking to establish communication with NGOs that have done or are currently doing projects focused solely on hand washing in India. We are seeking to learn from past hand washing projects in India. In this regard we seek members' contributions on:

- Are there any examples of SHGs which are involved in designing, producing and selling their own home-grown hand washing solutions?
- Are there any case studies documenting these processes?
- What is the methodology for assessing the impact of hand washing on health and other factors?

Your inputs will be very useful to us for carrying out this programme.

---

## Responses were received, with thanks, from

1. [Rekha Bhatkhande](#), Shushrusa Citizens' Cooperative Hospital, Mumbai
2. [J Geetha](#), Gramalaya, Tiruchirapally
3. [Ashwani Wanganeo](#), Department of Environmental Science & Limnology, Barkatullah University, Bhopal
4. [Johnson Rhenius](#), WaterAid India, Lucknow
5. [J.P.Maithani](#), Society for Community Involvement in Development, Chamoli
6. S. D. Limaye, Groundwater Institute, Pune ([Response 1](#)) ([Response 2](#))
7. [Vaikumar](#), GREDS, Pondicherry
8. [B. L. Kaul](#), Society for Popularization of Science, Jammu
9. [Gyanendra Mishra](#), UDAAN Society, Aligarh
10. [Joshua Godfrey](#), Water.org, Tiruchirapally
11. [Shrinivas Indapurkar](#), BAIF Development Research Foundation, Pune
12. [Mayur Joshi](#), Udgam Charitable Trust, Gandhinagar
13. [M Jahangir](#), FANSA-Pak, Islamabad

*Further contributions are welcome!*

---

[Summary of Responses](#)  
[Comparative Experiences](#)  
[Related Resources](#)  
[Responses in Full](#)

---

## Summary of Responses

Self-help groups (SHGs) have been involved in sanitation-related activities in different parts of the country for a while as producers of sanitary napkins and other products. However, in some places they have ventured into the software side of sanitation by acting as conduits for concepts like hand washing both among members and their host community. In many cases, a local non-government organization (NGO) has taken the initiative to get SHGs to start this activity. There are a few examples where SHGs have actively promoted hand washing and developed soaps.

Washing hands after defecating and before cooking or eating sounds like common sense. However, a majority of people do not wash their hands with soap. This leaves them and their children more vulnerable to disease, especially diarrhoea; this is the leading cause of death among children aged 4-14, accounting for 27 per cent of all cases. The other related cause of death, by respiratory disease, is also closely linked to not washing hands with soap.

Studies by different agencies and the Government of India show washing hands at the correct time can prevent 47 per cent of the cases of diarrhoea and prevent a quarter of the resultant diseases. It can also cut the risk of respiratory tract infections by a third. A paper published in *Lancet*, additional research shows, indicates that washing hands with soap can reduce the risk of diarrhoeal diseases by 42 - 47% and interventions to promote hand-washing might save a million lives. However, people do

not wash their hands with soap; in most households, soap is available but used for bathing and washing clothes.

Thus, a reduction in diarrhoea is one of the indicators to assess the effectiveness of hand washing. The women who are members of SHGs can easily gather this information within their communities to monitor how hand washing has helped raise standards of hygiene. They can also offer the 'last-mile' connectivity to educate communities in hand washing in particular and hygiene in general.

In Chamoli, [Uttarakhand](#), a federation of SHGs called Alaknanda Ghaati Shilpi Federation involved in the crafts, has developed a low-cost liquid hand wash. It comprises of soap nuts, cowdung, apricot and orange peel. It promotes this with its members for hand washing, and vaidis (traditional medicine practitioners) talk about the need for hand washing. Another type of low-cost hand washing medium uses ash from cowdung cake mixed with soap nut powder.

An organization called [Water.org](#) works with SHGs in five states – Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa – to promote hygiene. The groups are involved in the entire project lifecycle. Health educators from the NGO train SHG member on hand washing and attend their meetings. They track how many women from the SHGs have demonstrated hand washing at home and the best SHGs are awarded the Best Socially Responsible SHGs.

In Mumbai, [Maharashtra](#), the Sushrusha Citizens' Cooperative Hospital has promoted hand washing among its patients and their visitors. It has put up posters extolling to wash hands before leaving the hospital as the best way to prevent 'carrying germs back home' and preventing viral infections. In Gandhinagar, [Gujarat](#), an NGO has promoted hand washing and hygiene through school children.

Gramalaya, [Tamil Nadu](#), has conducted a school health programme in the Tiruchirapalli District. It organized a hand washing involving SHGs, sanitation staff and the district education authorities. Women SHG members led students on rallies to promote hand washing, distributed soaps, buckets and cups, and demonstrated hand washing techniques.

WaterAid has developed a module that SHGs can use for information and communications. This depicts sanitation and hygiene pictorially and has games and a picture tool. This fills an important gap in the availability of readymade material for publicity and awareness. If SHGs can take up hand washing in a big way, it can significantly reduce the incidence of water-borne diseases.

---

## Comparative Experiences

### Gujarat

**Udgam Charitable Trust reaches 5,000 students under its handwashing campaign, Gandhinagar district** (from [Mayur Joshi](#), *Udgam Charitable Trust, Gandhinagar*)

Udgam has started a project called Aarohan with school children. Under this children are trained on handwashing. They in turn train other students and monitor handwashing activities at the schools before the mid-day meal. Udgam provided soaps to 16 schools and in the first phase covered 5,000 students. It now intends to reach out to 1,25,000 students. The campaign is being monitored by volunteers and by the district rural health mission. Read [more](#).

### Maharashtra

**Hospital promotes handwashing among its doctors and visitors, Mumbai** (from [Rekha Bhatkhande](#), *Shushrusha Citizens' Cooperative Hospital, Mumbai*)

A handwashing campaign has been started at the hospital, involving its 12,000 members to convey the message that handwashing can protect against viral and bacterial infections prevalent in Mumbai. Photo charts of the procedure of handwashing have been placed at strategic places in the hospital for visitors who are also encouraged to wash hands before leaving the premises. By doing so it is hoped to eventually bring down the incidence of nosocomial infections. Read [more](#).

## Tamil Nadu

### Gramalaya involves SHG members in its school handwashing campaign, Tiruchirapalli district

(from [J Geetha](#), Gramalaya, Tiruchirapally)

Gramalaya conducted a school health programme in 257 schools and organised a mega handwashing campaign in the project areas. It involved SHGs, TSC and District educational offices. The women SHG members led the school students in their villages for demonstration. The SHGs contributed soaps, buckets and cups for demonstrating proper handwashing to every household. This initiative reached 30,000 school students in 429 villages. Read [more](#).

### Water.org trains SHGs in handwashing (from [Joshua Godfrey](#), Water.org, Tiruchirapally)

Water.org works with SHGs in promoting handwashing. Health educators and volunteers are trained to interact with SHGs and educate women and school children in handwashing with visuals, WATSAN songs and method demonstration. The best SHGs are awarded the best socially responsible SHG award during the annual federation meeting. The programmes now cover the entire project area of 707 villages and slums in five states, including Tamil Nadu. Read [more](#).

## Uttarakhand

### Alaknanda Ghaati Shilpi Federation, Chamoli (from [J.P.Maithani](#), Society for Community Involvement in Development, Chamoli)

Alaknanda Ghaati Shilpi Federation is a group of the 124 SHGs involved in different programmes. It has developed a low cost liquid made of a few Himalayan herbs including soap nuts, cow dung, apricot and orange peel and promoted this among the SHG members for handwashing. This experiment is quite new and traditional healers are also now involved in this programme.

## Related Resources

### Recommended Documentation

From [Sunetra Lala](#), Research Associate

### Effect of Intensive Handwashing Promotion on Childhood Diarrhea in High-Risk Communities in Pakistan

Article; by P. Stephen Luby, Mubina Agboatwalla, John Painter, Arshad Altaf, L. Ward Billhimer, and Robert M. Hoekstra; The Journal of the American Medical Association; USA; 2004;

Available at <http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/291/21/2547>

*The article evaluates the effect of promoting household hand washing with soap among children who are at the highest risk of death from diarrhea*

### Effect of Several Interventions on the Frequency of Handwashing among Elementary Public School Children

Article; by E. Early, K. Battle, E. Cantwell, J. English, J. Lavin and E. Larson; American Journal of Infection Control; USA;

Available at <http://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S0196655398800114>

*It assess the positive health effects of several interventions such as the frequency of handwashing among elementary public school children*

### What causes Sustainable Changes in Hygiene Behaviour? A Cross-sectional Study from Kerala, India

Article; by Sandy Cairncross, Kathleen Shordt, Suma Zacharia and Beena Kumari Govindan; Science Direct; The Netherlands; May 2005;

Available at [http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?\\_ob=ArticleURL&\\_udi=B6VBF-4G94HY0-6&\\_user=10&\\_rdoc=1&\\_fmt=&\\_ori=\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_g=search&\\_sort=d&\\_docanchor=&\\_view=c&\\_searchS trId=1091019745&\\_rerunOrigin=scholar.google&\\_acct=C00050221&\\_version=1&\\_urlVersion=0&\\_userid=10&\\_md5=91f9e924bbb19d4b3bccdd08799e4ad7](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B6VBF-4G94HY0-6&_user=10&_rdoc=1&_fmt=&_ori=_____g=search&_sort=d&_docanchor=&_view=c&_searchS trId=1091019745&_rerunOrigin=scholar.google&_acct=C00050221&_version=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=10&_md5=91f9e924bbb19d4b3bccdd08799e4ad7)

*Studies changed hygiene behaviour, including handwashing at various periods up to nine years which shows a link to improved health in Kerala*

**Talking Dirty: How to Save a Million Lives**

Article; by V. Curtis; London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine; International Journal of Environmental Health Research; London; 2003;

Available at <http://www.hygienecentral.org.uk/pdf/talking%20dirty.pdf> (PDF; Size: 96KB)

*Discusses how a review of literature on handwashing puts it on top in the list of possible interventions to prevent diarrhoea, yet few people wash their hands at critical times*

**Recommended Organizations and Programmes****Shushrusha Citizens' Cooperative Hospital Ltd., Maharashtra** (from [Rekha Bhatkhande](#))

698-B, Ranade Road, Dadar (W), Mumbai 400028, Maharashtra; Tel: 91-22-24449161; Fax: 91-22-24457067; <http://www.shushrushahospital.org/>

*Has initiated a handwashing campaign involving its 2000 members, which includes encouraging both the staff and visitors to wash their hands before leaving the premises*

**Gramalaya, Tamil Nadu** (from [J Geetha](#))

No 12, 4th Cross West, Thillainagar, Tiruchirapalli 620018, Tamil Nadu; Tel: 91-431-4021563; [gramalaya@hotmail.com](mailto:gramalaya@hotmail.com); <http://www.gramalaya.in/aboutus.php>

*Organised the Global Hand Washing Day campaign which reached 30000 school students in 429 villages, aimed to educate students about the health benefits of handwashing*

**WaterAid, New Delhi** (from [Johnson Rhenius](#))

Gate No 1, First Floor, Nursery School Building, C-3, Nelson Mandela Marg, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi 110070; Tel: 91-11-46084400; Fax: 91-11-46084411 [wai@wateraid.org](mailto:wai@wateraid.org); [http://www.wateraid.org/india/what\\_we\\_do/default.asp](http://www.wateraid.org/india/what_we_do/default.asp)

*Has developed a SHG module on water sanitation and hygiene, which also has lessons on handwashing*

**SUZLON Foundation, Maharashtra** (from [Vaikumar](#), GREDS, Pondicherry)

5, Godrej Millennium, Koregaon Park Road, Pune; Tel: 91-20-20-40122000; Fax: 91-20-40122100; [suzloncorpcomm@suzlon.com](mailto:suzloncorpcomm@suzlon.com); [http://www.suzlonfoundation.org/contact\\_us.aspx](http://www.suzlonfoundation.org/contact_us.aspx)

*Is supporting WATSAN model villages which involves SHGs and school children in Mannadipattu, Pondicherry*

**Water.org, Tamil Nadu** (from [Joshua Godfrey](#))

Provide all that apply: Address; Tel: 816-8778400; Fax: Fax No. [donorcare@water.org](mailto:donorcare@water.org); <http://water.org/projects/india/>

*Works with NGOs and microfinance institutions to deliver WATSAN services by involving SHGs to implement the WATSAN and handwashing programmes in Tamil Nadu*

**Udgam Charitable Trust, Gujarat** (from [Mayur Joshi](#))

2nd floor, Plot 170, Sector 21, Gandhinagar, Gujarat; Tel: 91-79-23235413; Fax: 91-79-23235413; [info@udgam.org](mailto:info@udgam.org); <http://udgam.org/project.php?id=7>

*Is promoting handwashing in the schools of Gandhinagar, Gujarat and has so far covered 5,000 students in the district*

From [Sunetra Lala](#), Research Associate

**United Nations Children's Education Fund (UNICEF), New Delhi**

73 Lodhi Estate, New Delhi 110003; Tel: 91-11-24690401; Fax: 91-11-24627521; [newdelhi@unicef.org](mailto:newdelhi@unicef.org); [http://www.unicef.org/india/children\\_2357.htm](http://www.unicef.org/india/children_2357.htm)

*UN agency working with the government to introduce sanitation and hygiene education into schools and has been actively involved in the Global Hand Washing Campaign*

**North East Diocesan Social Forum, Assam**

Joypur, Kharghuli, Post Box No. 186, Guwahati 781004, Assam; Tel: 91-361-2521562; [info@nedsf.net](mailto:info@nedsf.net); <http://nedsf.net/health.htm>; Contact Father Santiago; Director; Tel: 91-361-2519562; [nedsf@rediffmail.com](mailto:nedsf@rediffmail.com)

*A Church based NGO, which has been involved in a handwashing campaign with several schools in Assam aimed to reduce the burden of diseases in school children*

## **Related Consolidated Replies**

### **Evidence of Effectiveness of Hand washing on Child Health, Shivani Kapoor, Futures Group, New Delhi (Experiences; Referrals). Water Community, Solution Exchange India,**

Issued 13/11/2009. Available at <http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/environment/cr/cr-se-wes-06100901.pdf> (PDF,Size: 80KB)

*Seeks inputs on India-specific data on key scientific evidence of the effectiveness of handwashing and its positive impacts on child health*

---

## **Responses in Full**

### **Rekha Bhatkhande, Shushrusha Citizens' Cooperative Hospital, Mumbai**

We have started a hand-washing campaign in our hospital, and hope to convey the message to our 12,000 members that simple hand-washing can protect all of us from viral and bacterial infections prevalent in Mumbai. (We have 12,000 members because we are the oldest Co-operative Healthcare Facility in Asia. the cooperative concept of healthcare delivery is one we are proud of and hope to popularise throughout India one day.)

We have placed photo charts of the procedure of hand-washing at strategic places in the hospital. One of the suggestions that visitors to and staff of the hospital should always wash their hands before leaving the hospital 'so that they do not take an infection home' works as a great motivation! In the hospital we hope to eventually bring down the incidence of noscomial infections and be a part of a national movement to squash the 'super bug' or emergence of a new one.

Hand-washing is the key to preventive measures against both hospital and community infections. We encourage people to wash their hands with soap and running water. In case of stored water, it has to be poured over hands. Scrubbing of the hands is a must during the wash, especially the webs of the hand. Hand-washing must be carried out on reaching place of work/ study, before and after meals, always after using the toilet facility, and on starting back for home, repeating the cycle at home.

Doctors use alcohol rubs for convenience but a good old fashioned hand-wash is the best. Disinfectant soaps have an edge over the scented ones but it the amount of time one spends in the cleaning the hands rather than the type of soap used that matters. Drying the hands after washing them is as important, natural air drying by waving wet hands in the air is easy and inexpensive but takes up time, otherwise the use of only paper napkins or paper roll is allowed. This paper should also be used to shut off the faucet after washing.

Never allow the use of cloth napkins! If hand dryers are used then hands have to be placed under the dryer and kept there for the full drying time cycle, that is at least or more than 30 seconds, and the hands are never to be rubbed under the hand dryer. Remember, if one is suffering from cough, cold, flu, vomiting or diarrhoea avoid touching other people, our namaste is the best and safest form of greeting.

I hope these simple instructions are helpful in spreading the message: *wash your hands, your health depends on it.*

---

### **J Geetha, Gramalaya, Tiruchirapally**

Gramalaya was conducting a school health programme in 257 schools in Tiruchirapalli District with WaterAid and [www.water.org](http://www.water.org) support in 2008. In the project, Gramalaya has organized a mega hand-washing campaign in the project areas of Thottiam, Thattheyangarpet and Thuraiyur blocks of Tiruchirapalli District in Tamil Nadu. Special permission obtained from the District Educational officer

for conducting the campaign. A detailed action plan was prepared for conducting the hand washing campaign with Gramalaya staff, women SHGs, TSC and District educational office.

It has been planned to involve 30,000 school students in 429 villages with teachers and PLF leaders'. We printed 60,000 stickers about hand washing techniques. It was planned that each student has to cover 5 houses and demonstrate how to wash hands with soap and water. Gramalaya Health educators explained in detail about this in the previous day in 300 schools and demonstrated the technique.

The women SHG members led the school students in their villages for demonstration. Women SHGs contributed soaps, buckets and cups for demonstrating the proper hand washing to every household. The students and women SHG members went from house to house, called the inmates of the house, explained the purpose of the visit and told them the importance of hand washing and at critical times etc., and pasted the stickers in the doors. Then they asked them to bring some water in a bucket or tub and showed them how to wash hands with soap and water.

PLF leaders and SHG members went going along with the students to clear the doubts and questions from the community. We involved 286 schools, 18,451 school students, 324 school teachers, 69 panchayat presidents, 2 union chairmen, 58 Gramalaya staff, 180 PLF leaders and 800 SHG members and covered 60,013 households in one day. During this campaign most of them got the learnt the correct hand washing technique.

### **Impact of the Hand washing campaign**

The community wonders about Hand washing techniques in critical time. Students always have a small bit of soap in their bags. Illiterate people also ask questions on seeing the stickers on the doors. Teachers realized that school health should be included in syllabus like other subjects. PRI members realized that hand washing is reducing diseases. This camp forms a way to involve all sector peoples like District Educational office, SSA, PRIs, HLL, Elected representatives, Scout Association and NSS students. Children are instructed their parents to wash hands before cooking and serving the food. Demonstration by students in their houses appreciated by their parents and realized about importance of hand washing.

---

### **Ashwani Wanganeo, Department of Environmental Science & Limnology, Barkatullah University, Bhopal**

Campaigns regarding washing of hands and making people understand the importance of washing should start from school. Every student should be asked to wash his / her hands before and after the meals and also after making water or going to latrine. This should be made mandatory and the class teacher should be made responsible for this.

In fact there should one complete period dedicated to hygiene where every thing should done in person (From cleaning of individual space to disposal of garbage and washing exercise) rather than teaching. For this, it is important to provide sufficient clean water. Every school should have a functional overhead tank other wise all efforts in this direction go waste.

---

### **Johnson Rhenius, WaterAid India, Lucknow**

IEC is important in promoting handwashing. In WaterAid we have developed a SHG module on water sanitation and hygiene with pictures which also has lessons on handwashing. The manual was developed through SHGs and is being widely used by many SHGs. The manual has games and picture tool. Also recently a WASH Games kit was developed for use in SHGs for raising awareness and pocket charts for assessment of hygiene behaviours.

Reduction of diarrhoea is the key indicator for hygiene practices including handwashing. A diarrhoea survey before and after the project or a scientific survey can be done on the impacts of handwashing.

Please contact us in case you need hardcopy of the SHG manual developed by us and the games tool

kit.

---

**[J.P.Maithani](#), Society for Community Involvement in Development, Chamoli**

We are a voluntary organization - Alaknanda Ghaati Shilpi Federation, in Chamoli Garhwal, Uttarakhand since 1997. This federation is a group of the 124 SHGs involved in different programs- Bamboo craft, off- season vegetable cultivation, cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants, dairy and nurseries.

We developed a low cost liquid made of a few Himalayan Herbs including soap nuts, cow dung, apricot and orange peel and promoted this among the SHG members for hand washing. This experiment is quite new and traditional *Vaidhyas* (traditional healers) are also involved in this programme. We promote health and hygiene practices and awareness amongst the SHGs members and their children at all possible levels, but we are in need of resources so that we can reach a big population.

---

**[S. D. Limaye](#), Groundwater Institute, Pune (response 1)**

The contents of the low-cost hand washing liquid seem to be OK except the Cow Dung. We have tried low-cost powder making use of firewood or coal ash (from kitchen) or ash from burning cowdung-cake (or rice husk), mixed with Soap Nut (Ritha) powder. Even if it is low-cost, people should not expect to get it free. For achieving sustained benefits they must learn to pay or make their own mixture.

---

**[Vaikumar](#), GREDS, Pondicherry**

We are working on WATSAN model villages with women SHGs and school children in the Mannadipattu commune of Pondicherry and Kandamangalam block of the Villupuram district supported by SUZLON foundation and DRDA. In Pondicherry the rural village sanitation condition is very poor and there is no panchayat that has achieved total sanitation in the state. We need to develop model villages to support IEC tools and training for hand washing.

---

**[B. L. Kaul](#), Society for Popularization of Science, Jammu**

[Ashwani Wanganeo](#)'s suggestion is very relevant. As we know most communicable diseases can be prevented if we make it a habit to wash hands and to teach this school is the right place. It should be made mandatory for schools to provide overhead tanks and washrooms. If this is done most diseases will be controlled.

---

**[Gyanendra Mishra](#), UDAAN Society, Aligarh**

We are currently working on reducing IMR and MMR through family planning initiative in 42 urban slums of Aligarh, a nearby district of Agra.

Kudos for starting such a nice initiative at Agra. Actually slums dwellers are the most vulnerable among all and need more interventions at the field level (even more than rural people). The reasons are the filthy environment, unavailability of water and sanitation facilities, lack of health awareness and moreover, the struggle to strive for better lifestyles in urban settings. I feel the Government of India has launched so many programmes focusing rural communities but the urban slum dwellers are not the focus yet.

I feel slum dwellers are not thinking about water and sanitation as they have not given importance to these issues as they feel there are more pressing matters. So the involvement of local partners including SHGs is a good initiative. But the problem is that since most of the slum dwellers are not the permanent residents of the place the sustainability of the SHG is in question. If we cover only the permanent residents, they are only few in number and to cover all the population is again an uphill

task. So my suggestion is while working with slum dwellers, it is better to work with other groups rather than focusing only on SHGs?

---

### **[Joshua Godfrey](#), [Water.org](#), Tiruchirapally**

[Water.org](#) works with NGOs and microfinance institutions (MFIs) to deliver watsan services, largely involving SHGs/JLGs to implement the watsan programme in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Orrisa. [Water.org](#)'s current phase of programming was initiated in late 2008 and as of October 2010, it has rendered watsan services to nearly 40,000 members of SHGs and a population of 192,000.

Prime role of SHGs in promoting hand washing:

**Knowledge Dissemination:** SHGs are the door-to-post means of conveying information and they are the vehicle to carry the information to their family, friends and relatives. In a typical Indian community, women play a vital role in disseminating traditional knowledge gained through experience. All [Water.org](#) partners work with SHGs and they are involved in the entire project cycle. The health educators/peer educators/volunteers are trained to interact with SHGs and educate women and school children in hand washing with visuals, watsan songs and method demonstration, as applicable to hand washing techniques and critical times for hand washing.

**Promote action:** Health educators' prime role is to attend the meetings of SHGs and visit the members individually at their residence. By closing this loop of targeting SHG members in group meetings and individual home visits assist in inducing the action and onsite mentoring. In most of the MIS, NGOs take an account of number of women who have demonstrated hand washing techniques to their children/family members/relatives and others. The best SHGs in those terms are awarded the *best socially responsible SHG* aware during the annual federation meeting. This encourages other SHGs to act and promote action. Preliminary observations indicate that both men and women are interested in promotion of hand washing because of its potential impact on their children's health and well being.

**Scale up:** After the first half of the project period the responsibility to keep up the watsan standards in the village is solely shouldered by SHG animators and SHG federation representatives. The federations monitor and push SHGs to prove that they are socially responsible, consistently. Thus the programmes cover the entire project area 707 villages and slums (180 NGO and 527 MFI) in five states.

---

### **[Shriniwas Indapurkar](#), [BAIF Development Research Foundation](#), Pune**

If the school is ready to construct a platform of 10 feet by 10 feet and provide two tanks of 1000 litres each, then we have a very good system of water purification. It gives bacteria-free water. The system requires water to fill the overhead tank and electricity along with a small pump to lift the water to a height of 15 feet. The limitation is, it doesn't remove heavy metal like arsenic, chromium, etc., but cleans water very well. Along with this, we can have an awareness programme among school children. We can also involve older children i.e., class 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> students in the construction of the plant. The cost of maintenance is negligible. We can also get contributions from the community since villagers need clean drinking water.

---

### **[Mayur Joshi](#), [Udgam Charitable Trust](#), Gandhinagar**

Udgam has been working since 1997 in the Gandhinagar district. We are doing the same thing with the school children of Gandhinagar district (promoting sanitation, transforming youth concerns into social development and women's empowerment) that are also the focus of Udgam. The Government of India awarded Nirmal Gram Puraskar to 17 villages in our project areas.

As we all aware villagers are not habituated to washing hands with soap due to their social and economic conditioning. However, in our work we have found that promoting hand washing at certain times is very essential and we started a project called Aarohan with school children.

Under this we train a girl and a boy from each class on how to wash hands correctly with soap. They in

turn train other students and monitor them to wash hands properly before the mid-day meal. We provide soap to 16 schools but need much more soap to cover around 1,25,000 students for one year.

In first phase we have covered 5,000 students. The main objective of the project is to create awareness in the larger society through students about the cause and effects of improper sanitation and improve attendance of students in schools. Udgam will cover all the schools in Gandhinagar district in this campaign. We are monitoring this process through a 2-way system; one is through our volunteers and other is the district rural health mission.

If you want to more on this you can contact us <http://udgam.org/project.php?id=7>.

---

**[S D Limaye](#), Groundwater Institute, Pune (response 2)**

With reference to the response from [Indapurkar](#), BAIF, can he please provide a description of the plant to explain how the water is purified by using 2 tanks at a height of 15 feet.

---

**[M Jahangir](#), FANSA-Pak, Islamabad**

This sounds like a great chance for schools in poor communities. Can we have some details to the extent that we can replicate this in Pakistan.

---

***Many thanks to all who contributed to this query!***

*If you have further information to share on this topic, please send it to Solution Exchange for the Water Community in India at [se-wes@solutionexchange-un.net.in](mailto:se-wes@solutionexchange-un.net.in) with the subject heading "Re: [se-watr] Query: Role of Self Help Groups in promoting Hand Washing - Experiences; Referrals. Additional Reply."*

**Disclaimer:** *In posting messages or incorporating these messages into synthesized responses, the UN accepts no responsibility for their veracity or authenticity. Members intending to use or transmit the information contained in these messages should be aware that they are relying on their own judgment.*



Copyrighted under Creative Commons License "[Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.5](#)". Re-users of this material must cite as their source Solution Exchange as well as the item's recommender, if relevant, and must share any derivative work with the Solution Exchange Community.



Solution Exchange is a UN initiative for development practitioners in India. For more information please visit [www.solutionexchange-un.net.in](http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in)

---



[\[Message index\]](#)



[\[se-watr\] CONSOLIDATED REPLY: Role of Self Help Groups in promoting Hand Washing - Experiences; Referrals](#)

By: Nitya Jacob on Thu, 09 December 2010 12:44

Previous [\[se-watr\] \[se-wes\]QUERY: Bringing about Behavioural Changes in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene. Advice; Experiences. Reply by 6 December 2010](#)

-=[Back to Top](#) [=