



# Using Emotional Motivators to Promote Handwashing with Soap (HWWS) in Emergencies



OXFAM

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## BACKGROUND

- Diarrhoeal disease and respiratory infections are responsible for 30% of deaths among children in communities displaced by an emergency<sup>1</sup>.
- 40% of these deaths occur in the acute phase of the crisis<sup>2</sup>.
- Distribution of soap alone can reduce the incidence of diarrhoeal disease by 27%<sup>3</sup>
- There is limited documented evidence on non-health related motivators around hand washing with soap in emergency contexts.
- In partnership with Unilever's Chief Sustainability Office and Lifebuoy, Oxfam conducted formative research to better understand motivators and barriers among mothers affected by an emergency in the Philippines, Pakistan and Nepal.
- The idea was to find crosscutting motivators and themes that could be used to produce creative materials to encourage mothers and female carers to improve their hand washing behavior by washing their hands at critical moments throughout the day – such as after going to the toilet and before eating in first phase emergency contexts.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

1. Identify current levels of knowledge and practice related to hand washing with soap at critical times
2. Profile the target audience (daily routine, beliefs and aspirations)
3. Identify cross cutting barriers to practicing hand washing with soap
4. Identify crosscutting emotional and physical motivating factors that drive hand washing with soap in target audience
5. Understand communication channels used by the target audience

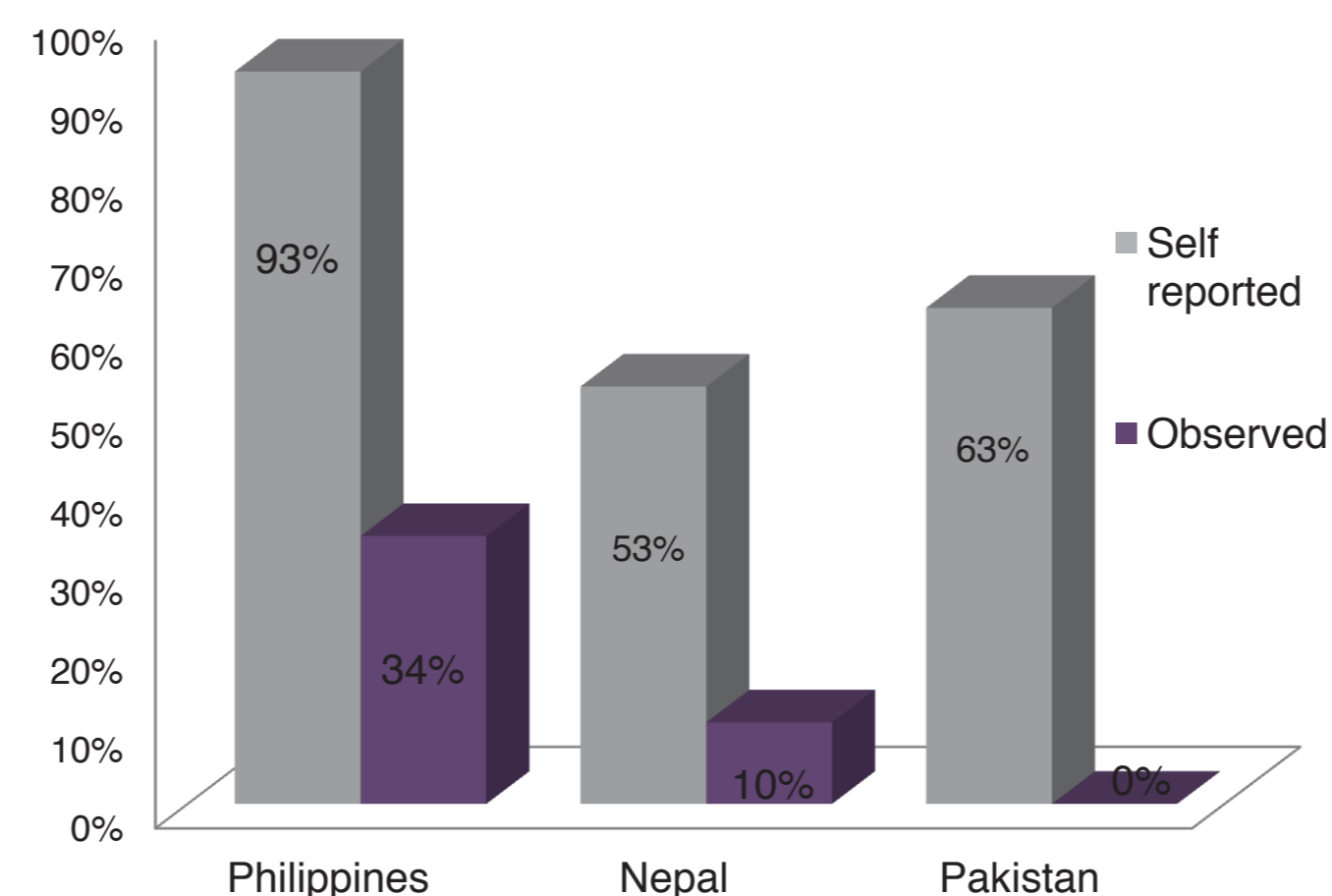
## METHODS

- Study locations:**
  - Jalozai camp, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan: September 8 – December 22, 2014
  - Tacloban City, Eastern Visayas, Philippines: October 15 – December 15, 2014
  - Kathmandu, Nepal: July 1-25, 2015
- Data collection methods:**
  - In-depth interviews with key informants (community influencers/gatekeepers, doctors, community health workers, etc.)
  - Focus group discussions (10 vignettes representing emotional motivators)
  - Structured observation (HWWS at key intervals)
  - Household survey (using Mobenzi mobile technology)
  - Behavioural trial (5 days - Pakistan and Philippines only)
- Sampling method:**
  - Stratified random sampling
  - Based on 5% margin of error, 95% confidence interval (Philippines, Pakistan)
  - 8% margin of error, 95% confidence interval (Nepal)

## RESULTS: AUDIENCE PROFILE

- Mother in crisis situation i.e. natural disaster, drought, disease outbreak, etc.
- 18-60 years of age with children of all ages
- Resilient – despite crisis situation, does her best to ensure her children are cared for and have a neat, clean appearance
- Enjoys discussions with friends and neighbours for social support, sharing stories, challenges
- Feels it is important to maintain a certain image in front of others
- Wants to give her children the best chance at success
- Dreams of regaining a sense of normalcy

## RESULTS: SELF REPORTED VS OBSERVED HWWS BEFORE EATING

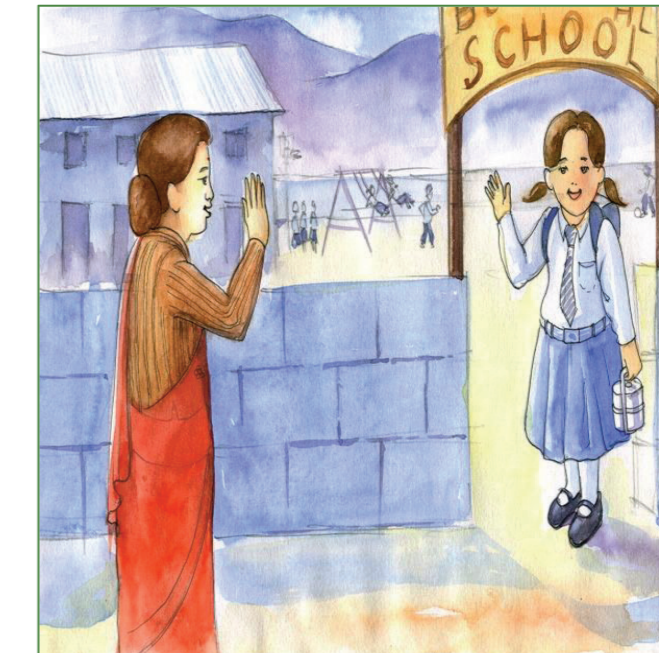


- Significant knowledge-practice gap in all 3 contexts
- Common belief that visibly clean hands are clean
- Common practice of using water only to wash hands before eating based on habit and socio-cultural beliefs around purity and cleanliness

## RESULTS: BARRIERS TO HWWS IN EMERGENCIES

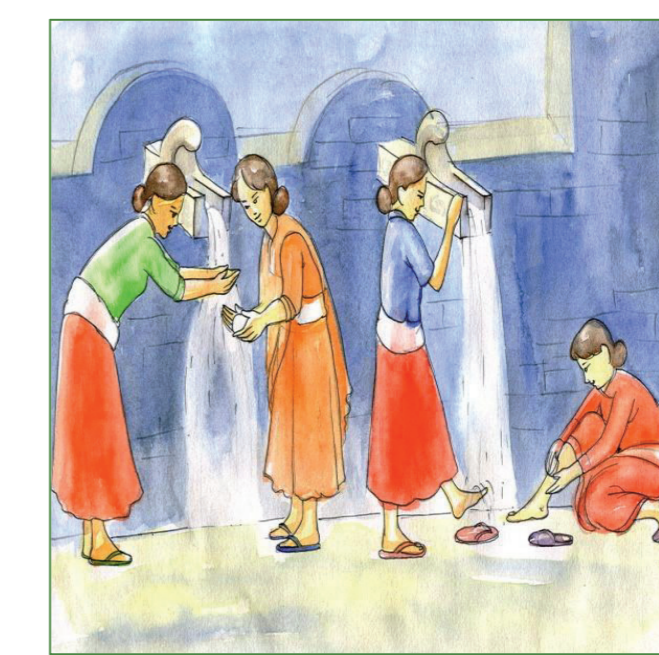
- More pressing priorities like food, shelter and water
- Lack of access to soap and water
- Lack of designated hand washing place at the household level
- Too busy/lack of time
- Belief that lack of physical dirt/substances means hands are clean; mothers are more likely to wash hands with soap if hands are oily, dirty or sticky
- Belief that illness is in the control of a deity or is one's "fate" rather than something that can be prevented
- Consoling a crying child takes precedence over washing hands with soap before feeding
- Belief that water alone is enough to clean hands before eating

## RESULTS: CROSSCUTTING MOTIVATORS AROUND HWWS IN EMERGENCIES



### NURTURE

"The kind of care and teachings that a child receives from her mother will become part of her habits. If she was nurtured in a good way she will become a person with good character and eventually she will become successful in life" (Rosalinda, age 32, Tacloban, Philippines)



### AFFILIATION

"When we eat together from one plate with clean hands, it signifies that we are united and strong as a tribe" (Rahida, age 21, Jalozai camp, Pakistan).

"Fitting in is important to me because we naturally follow others; in doing this we can belong to a group and be viewed in a positive light from others in the circle" (Sangita, age 30, Kathmandu, Nepal).

## RESULTS: HWWS COMMUNICATION CHANNELS IN EMERGENCIES

- Interpersonal communication** - peer to peer communication through existing community health volunteers or volunteers from the community.
- Group** – group sessions are more effective in terms of reach and conducive to discussions.
- Storytelling** - present ideas and concepts through stories; an effective way to promote messages without undermining existing levels of knowledge.
- Short animation** – can be played during hygiene kit distributions, in small or large group sessions, at women friendly spaces, etc.
- Theatre or drama** - as above.
- Radio** - where target group has access but should be used to complement more interactive methods rather than a standalone activity.

## CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Findings in post emergency context in Pakistan, The Philippines and Nepal reveal that nurture and affiliation were cross cutting motivators amongst mothers and females.
- Mothers already have knowledge related to hand washing; it is important not to undermine this.
- Before promoting HWWS, it is important to ensure mothers have access to soap and water.
- Using emotional motivators in HWWS communications could potentially be more effective than the use of health benefits alone in emergency contexts.

## REFERENCES

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