

# Clean Household Approach

To reduce stunting and improve child health

## The Problem

Water and environmental borne pathogens have a tremendous impact on children's health: **Diarrheal disease** accounts for 1 in 9 child deaths worldwide, killing 2,195 children every day—more than AIDS, malaria and measles combined.<sup>1</sup> **Stunting**, or low height for age, currently affects more than 165 million children worldwide.<sup>2</sup> While mortality for stunting is lower than for diarrheal disease, it results in lifelong cognitive and physical deficits, especially during the first two years of life.

Poor water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) plays a critical piece in both stunting and diarrheal disease. Why hasn't the WASH sector had greater impact on diarrheal disease in under 5s and stunting

in under 2s? One reason is its communal focus. Though clean water can be provided at a communal water point, it is often contaminated before it reaches a child's mouth for consumption. Similarly, though increasing coverage of latrines has a global health effect, it is not cost effective, and, it is likely that the bulk of environmental pathogens for under 2s come from dirty play spaces, dirty hands and unclean water. Lastly, economic decisions (both time and money) are personal and individual, made at the household level. People invest in community after the self (including the self's family) is taken care of. If the investment won't benefit the self, the likelihood of success is less.

## The Solution

Save the Children's Clean Household Approach (CHA) provides an umbrella for a host of household WASH interventions that address child health. It includes four

central elements that allow households to achieve "clean household status":

1. Clean drinking water for children under 5 and filtered drinking water for children 6 months to 2 years of age.
2. Handwashing at appropriate times for newborn care, food preparation and before eating.
3. Clean play spaces around children, especially under 2 years of age.
4. Safe disposal of child feces, either through a latrine, garbage pit or other disposal mechanism.

The CHA understands that households spend more on, and take better care of, personal investments (e.g. their own children) than communal investments. Rather than an aid model, where communal interventions are donated and voluntarily managed, the CHA uses a multidimensional, market model, where individual household spending decisions are leveraged to improve child health. CHA makes WASH affordable, accessible and practical.

The multi-dimensionality of the CHA model understands that both technology and behaviors are part of the solution. It realizes the supply of WASH products and services must meet the demand to achieve outcomes. AND, it recognizes that unless enabling factors are in place, none of the above can work. To achieve the outcomes it desires, it works in four principle areas: Demand Creation, Behaviors, WASH Product and Service Supply and Enabling Environment.

## Creating Demand for WASH: Willingness-to-Pay, Vouchers, Rewards, CLTS

How do you get people to pay for household commodities that they don't prioritize? Make them affordable, accessible and desirable.

Save the Children's CHA uses a variety of incentives and methodologies to encourage households to invest in WASH. A set of criteria is established for a model "Clean Household" that constitutes an attainable status. Households that satisfy the criteria are rewarded and recognized, e.g. a flag for each successful house. This umbrella approach provides the framework under which

**Community vs Household Communal WASH interventions — e.g. a water point jointly managed, Community-Led Total Sanitation, etc. — fall short of achieving desired outcomes for children. Communal investments are less valued by people. People care for and maintain personal belongings better than communal property.**

1. <http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/global/diarrhea-burden.html>

2. <http://jia.sipa.columbia.edu/stunting-a-countrys-lasting-burden>

households are then incentivized to purchase and use WASH products and services appropriately.

Incentive structures are typically designed after conducting a simple willingness-to-pay study. Data gathered allows programs to determine the difference between what a consumer is willing to pay for a WASH product or service, when they are willing to pay for it (e.g. during harvest season when they have more disposable income) and the actual cost of the product.

With this information, a voucher program subsidizes the difference between willingness-to-pay and cost. The voucher is typically redeemable for a discount on a (or multiple) WASH product/service with approved vendors. It is usually awarded after participation in an integrated program, e.g. Antenatal care visits.

While CHA's incentive system works at the household level, where possible, it partners with other WASH demand creation efforts, e.g. CLTS (Community Led Total Sanitation). WASH product demand is thus created through a multitude of approaches.

## Behaviors

While WASH products are part of the solution, WASH behaviors are equally important for households targeting "clean household status".

1. Drinking clean water requires appropriate filter usage, adequate storage and safe access.
2. Handwashing requires innovative programming that moves past "this is good for your health" messaging.
3. Playing in clean spaces is critical for children who learn by putting ANYthing in their mouth.
4. Disposing of child feces must happen, either through proper usage of latrines for older children or safe disposal for younger children.

To achieve the above behaviors, a variety of tools must be employed, from the use of social norms such as gossip and peer pressure, to the use of school groups convened around the common experience of caretaking a younger sibling, to commercial and social marketing. At the end of the day, people need to be convinced that certain behaviors will help

them achieve their desired goals — be it status, pride, lovingness, etc.

## WASH Product and Service Supply

At the same time that the CHA creates demand for WASH products and services, it must also ensure a supply is available. Save the Children works with local vendors, entrepreneurs and artisans to provide approved household WASH products and services. Support includes training, links to accreditation programs, market research, marketing tools development and access to microfinance.

## Enabling Environment

Barriers exist at every level of change, from behavior, to access, to finance, to legal. CHA understands how operating environments can help or hinder every effort to change. They influence whether small entrepreneurs can stay in business and whether households can maintain standards.

As the MDGs reach their end, and as the WASH sector looks for the next, post-CLTS, post-ODF (Open Defecation Free) galvanizing strategy, CHA will work to enable both entrepreneurs and households to develop nascent WASH markets. CHA will slowly encourage adoption of national policies and increasing access to microfinance that enable households and entrepreneurs to meet and engage in market activity and behaviors that are self-reinforcing and sustainable.

**Save the Children invests in childhood – every day, in times of crisis and for our future. In the United States and around the world, we give children a healthy start, the opportunity to learn and protection from harm.**

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