

# Soap Stories and Toilet Tales





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## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	2
<b>Part 1. More Than Just a Day</b>	
<b>INDIA</b> Big is beautiful beyond a day .....	4
<b>CHAD</b> Good things in small packages .....	6
<b>LATIN AMERICA</b> A symphony of progress .....	8
<b>Part 2. Innovative Approaches</b>	
<b>MALI</b> The power of fun .....	10
<b>ANGOLA</b> Singing for soap (and water) .....	12
<b>BOLIVIA</b> A message in the streets .....	14
<b>Part 3. Impressive Partnerships</b>	
<b>IRAQ</b> Handwashing in difficult circumstances .....	16
<b>JAPAN</b> The Global Handwashing Dance .....	18
<b>INDONESIA</b> Nationwide success .....	20
<b>For the record</b> .....	22
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	23

# Introduction

The following stories are a small selection of highlights from more than 80 countries that celebrate Global Handwashing Day. They represent the myriad activities undertaken by UNICEF and partners to spread the message that “clean hands save lives” and to raise the profile of handwashing with soap – an important behaviour for promoting the health and development of all children.

In 2008, Global Handwashing Day was celebrated during the International Year of Sanitation declared by the United Nations General Assembly. Global Handwashing Day celebrations following its inaugural year demonstrate expanded creativity, engagement and energy, and hold tremendous promise for future events.

Global Handwashing Day has resulted in handwashing world records; new messages and ways of conveying the importance of handwashing with soap; additional country and community participation; and, most importantly, a whole lot of handwashing. The H1N1 global pandemic added urgency to Global Handwashing Day in many countries, resulting in even broader impact. Global Handwashing Day events have raised awareness of handwashing with soap as a legacy for children – the world’s future leaders – as well as their families and their communities.

Full description of all Global Handwashing Day activities during the past two years would fill volumes. The representative activities described in this publication are organized into three sets of stories. The first set focuses on moving Global Handwashing Day ‘beyond just a day’, the second on innovative ways to spread the Global Handwashing Day message, and the third on impressive partnerships in handwashing. We hope these examples inspire plans for how to make your Global Handwashing Day even better this year, or kick-start work in your country if it hasn’t yet joined in the celebration. To learn more, visit [www.globalhandwashingday.org](http://www.globalhandwashingday.org).

What follows are just a few of the many creative and inspiring stories from around the world. This publication is a tribute to the champions of Global Handwashing Day and a celebration of greater Global Handwashing Days to come!



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## All Hands for Handwashing

Initiated in 2008 by the Global Public-Private Partnership for handwashing with Soap (PPPHW), Global Handwashing Day – 15 October – is endorsed by an array of governments, international institutions, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private companies and individuals. PPPHW members include: Academy for Educational Development, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Colgate-Palmolive, International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, Procter & Gamble, UNICEF, Unilever, USAID, Water and Sanitation Program, Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council, and the World Bank.

Established in 2001, the PPPHW aims to reduce the incidence of diarrhoea and pneumonia in poor communities; to support partners' large-scale, national handwashing interventions and promote replication of successful approaches at the global level; and to share scientific evidence showing handwashing with soap to be an exceptionally efficacious and cost-effective health intervention.

# PART 1.

## More Than Just a Day

### INDIA Big is beautiful beyond a day

In terms of sheer numbers, India leads the way in organizing handwashing events at scale, reaching out to an astounding 80 million people in 533,500 schools and community centres. India's strategy extends Global Handwashing Day beyond a single day, both to boost visibility and to move beyond a one-day focus on behaviour change into a campaign to create *social change* – where handwashing with soap becomes a social norm and a way of life. In the states of Bihar, Gujarat, Rajasthan and West Bengal, concentrated campaigns lasted more than a week – leading to greater engagement opportunities for different sectors; wider participation of celebrities, political leaders and senior officials; a stronger mobilization of donor and national resources; and, most importantly, greater impact.



India's first Global Handwashing Day focused on two elements of handwashing with soap: the midday school meal and the proper way to wash hands. These were identified as specific areas of need where projects could be targeted to yield results. The country's newest campaign emphasizes that although many people wash their hands, it is critical that it be done at the proper times and in the correct manner.

To complement Global Handwashing Day activities, and to get some star power behind the event, television and radio spots featured cricket sensation Sachin Tendulkar, aka, the 'Master Blaster', telling Indian children that "clean hands are strong hands." The great popularity of Mr. Tendulkar and the wide airing of public service announcements added breadth and momentum to the celebration.

A central focus of India's Global Handwashing Day is a drive to incorporate handwashing with soap into everyday life. Making the change from a one-day, highlighted initiative to a lifelong skill takes a lot of energy and an even greater amount of dedication from planners and policymakers as well as individuals. India's campaign involves people from all walks of life, with a focus on children and women, to sustain the change in behaviour.



# Highlights

- Celebrities
- Week-long campaigns
- Reaching out to 80 million people!

## CHAD Good things in small packages

Global Handwashing Day in Chad employed a strategy to move beyond 15 October and into a *month* of promotion. The main means of doing this was to engage a multitude of partners – and engage them early. Novel methods were employed to involve high-level decision-makers as well as the many partners, particularly women’s groups, and to reach vulnerable populations.

Together with the Government of Chad, October was named the month of sanitation. To accomplish this, UNICEF Chad worked with a wide range of partners, from various







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# Highlights

- **Month-long celebration**
- **Outreach in schools and markets**
- **Camel and donkey parades!**

levels of government to civil society to municipal groups. Notably, local governments have shown great commitment in planning and implementing Global Handwashing Day in the cities of Goz Beida and Mao, while national government, in the capital city of N’Djamena, has tried to systematize Global handwashing day as part of a national strategy to promote handwashing. Several women’s groups were a focus of inclusion, adding emphasis on the role of women and girls to spread messages and change behaviours. To add visibility, a camel parade kicked off festivities in N’Djamena, with representatives of UNICEF and the World Food Programme among the riders.

Chad’s experience in focused outreach is a great example of using prominent social centres as message-dissemination points. Schools in the capital, schools and markets in Mao, sites for internally displaced people, and schools and markets in Goz Beida (which had a parade with donkeys instead of camels) were selected as the best areas of entry and operation, utilizing resources to reach the most people possible. Coupling this with the month-long celebration, handwashing proponents in Chad used effective means, in crucial locations, to make Global Handwashing Day a massive success – and to increase understanding that handwashing with soap is a change that can be broadly social, not just individual.

## LATIN AMERICA A symphony of progress

Latin America took 'moving Global Handwashing Day beyond a day' to heart, and many countries used the occasion to begin or reinforce activities already under way or to increase visibility of ongoing initiatives.

In Paraguay, this meant a two-month-long campaign organized in conjunction with the private sector to promote handwashing with soap and other good-hygiene messages. In Colombia, an alliance between the Ministry of Environment, Housing and Land Development along with the Ministry of Education developed a series of handwashing with soap training materials, while in Bogotá, the capital city, institutionalizing Global Handwashing Day has been proposed as a law.

Guatemala, Nicaragua and Suriname also did some impressive work taking Global Handwashing Day 'beyond a day'. Events ranged from Global Handwashing Day marking the start of a school hygiene competition in Suriname to the incorporation of core handwashing with soap messages into the Ministry of Health's community family health and care initiative in Nicaragua and a concerted Global Handwashing Day follow-up campaign in Guatemala's schools and communities – including the distribution of lots of soap. The varied approach in Latin America is an excellent illustration of the boundless ways to promote handwashing with soap – and to celebrate Global Handwashing Day and beyond!





# Highlights

- Mainstreaming Global Handwashing Day – laws, training, partnership – the possibilities are virtually endless!

## PART 2.

# Innovative Approaches

### **MALI** The power of fun

Mali's approach to celebrating Global Handwashing Day can best be described as highly visible fun. The Global Handwashing Day partnership engages high-profile members of government, national and international celebrities, and musical stars to add momentum and visibility. Casual events complement more formal celebrations to promote the idea that, above all, handwashing with soap is fun.

On 15 October 2009, at Modibo Keita Sports Stadium in Bamako, a whistle blew, as often happens. But this whistle didn't mark a penalty or conclude a race; it signalled the



start of a mass handwashing demonstration – hoping to achieve a new world record. Out on the playing field, 10,000 children began lathering vigorously in unison. And that’s not where the only action was.

On stage, leading the handwashers, was the President of Mali. In the stands were many other government ministers, including the Minister of Health and his Cabinet, as well as other luminaries, celebrities and dignitaries, and many more children – 15,000 people strong and all cheering the handwashers as they vigorously lathered, washed, rinsed and dried. A concert by a variety of famous artists and groups accompanied the handwashers, with much singing and dancing to make the event even more fun.

Later, yet another astonishing event took place: an ‘interplanetary’ (or earth-to-space) discussion on the importance of handwashing with soap. Is there diarrhoea in space? There may be, but we can be sure that there is handwashing in space, as astronaut Frank de Winne of the European Space Agency showed in a live feed interview with schoolchildren in the town of Gao.

But what about those who couldn’t make it to the ceremony or the ‘interplanetary’ event? Television, radio and press initiatives, as well as *3 million text messages* sent out to mobile phone users, spread the message far into the country. If you missed the Global Handwashing Day and handwashing with soap messages on 15 October, then you probably weren’t in Mali!



## Highlights

- Handwashing in outer space
- Millions of text messages
- Engaging the President as a lead handwasher!



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# Highlights

- Sing, sing out loud!
- A national child star appealing to other children.

## ANGOLA Singing for soap (and water)

*Lava lava, lava lava, lava as mãos com sabão.*

*Lava lava, lava lava, com água e sabão.*

*Lava lava, lava lava, lava as mãos com sabão.*

*Lava lava, lava lava, com água e sabão.*

~

*Wash wash, wash wash, wash your hands with soap.*

*Wash wash, wash wash, with water and soap.*

*Wash wash, wash wash, let's wash our hands with soap.*

*Wash wash, wash wash, with water and soap.*

Sometimes, when you want to really spread a message, you need to sing it, and sing it loud! In Angola, the planners know this, and they acted upon it. The handwashing with soap message filled the air in cities and towns, schools and offices, markets and homes during a month-long celebration (yet another country moving beyond a single day for handwashing with soap).

The song 'Wash Your Hands with Soap' is complemented by a music video commissioned by UNICEF and partners to reach children and spread the Global Handwashing Day and handwashing with soap message in a fresh and entertaining way. The chorus of 'Lava lava, lava lava' ('Wash wash, wash wash') could not have been more specific: Wash at home, wash at school, wash at play and always use soap! Music star Pedrito do Bie, a young Angolan, added relevance to the message for children.

Have you ever heard a catchy tune that you couldn't get out of your mind? Just imagine if the tune is about handwashing, and the song is running through thousands of minds at once. And imagine the song is accompanied by a video, and the video did not just focus on handwashing. Deworming, a significant issue in Angola, was promoted along with the handwashing with soap message, and again, songs and children were paired to focus the message. And it wasn't just a song and a music video, it was also a live performance.

Those lucky enough to attend the Global Handwashing Day event at Benguela, the site of the official launch ceremony, were treated to an appearance by Mr. do Bie, who sang to the dancing crowd. And while the children were numerous, two dancers stood out – the Minister of Education and the Vice Minister of Health. And you can be sure they got the musical message!

### Hand-Held Hand Washing

Mobile phones are increasingly being used to spread the handwashing with soap message around the world. Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Mali, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Togo and Zimbabwe are just some of the countries promoting handwashing with soap via short-message and texting technology.

## BOLIVIA A message in the streets

Bolivia took handwashing with soap to the people during Global Handwashing Day celebrations, using street fairs and marches – among other messaging and media – to raise awareness of handwashing with soap and add a popular flavour to Global Handwashing Day.

Street fairs and dramas highlighted the social aspects of handwashing with soap as essential for the whole community's well-being, and public theatre, performances, festivals and parades are outstanding ways to create social cohesion and positive interdependence, resulting in more people washing their hands properly in more places.

Global Handwashing Day in Bolivia was about communities and how they are responsible to and can help each other.

Even with something so seemingly personal as washing your hands, a social element can be added to the activities by using public spaces to spread the handwashing with soap message as a community-wide interest.

Add the recent H1N1 pandemic's spread in Bolivia – and the consequent public concern about the disease and the need for preventive measures – to the awareness of social interdependence, and one can easily see how Global Handwashing Day gained significance and momentum. Ensuring social cohesion around a health topic, such as the effectiveness of handwashing with soap in preventing the spread of H1N1 and other illnesses, is a way to create sustained momentum towards achieving behavioural change.

When people realize they are part of an interdependent group, there is more motivation to change behaviour because it will benefit both the individual *and* the group. The idea that others are depending on you can be an impetus to change, and a driving factor to properly wash your hands and make sure your neighbours do as well. Focusing on sharing this message in the most public of places, the streets, allowed Bolivia considerable success in the Global Handwashing Day celebration and activities.

Bolivia's activities went well beyond street fairs. The Global Handwashing Day and handwashing with soap message was delivered in a wonderful variety of ways. Text messages, television spots, newspaper ads, ministerial conferences, handwashing demonstrations and even an international soccer game between Bolivia and Brazil were all part of the action on 15 October. Power, and handwashing with soap, to the people!







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# Highlights

- **Pandemic prevention and handwashing go hand in hand.**
- **Social unity!**

# PART 3.

## Impressive Partnerships

### IRAQ Handwashing in difficult circumstances

A lot of things are difficult to do in Iraq these days, but handwashing doesn't have to be one of them, and Global Handwashing Day was celebrated around the country, with events engaging a wide variety of people.

Schools were the main focus of Iraq's Global Handwashing Day, and children were envisioned as the driving force. Through partnerships with NGOs and the Government, schools in Iraq served as distribution centres for the handwashing with soap message, encouraging children to share information in their communities and help change society.



Hygiene kits, posters and leaflets were distributed in schools all over the country. A national drawing competition for schoolchildren was one of the many fun events, creating a friendly competition between schools while promoting the Global Handwashing Day.

Handwashing with soap sessions were held in select schools, incorporating NGOs and other segments of the community to increase involvement and sustain the handwashing message. And for outreach beyond schoolchildren, an assortment of press releases for periodicals and journals was produced, and television and radio public service announcements were created in partnership with government ministries.

Iraq's experience shows that while circumstances may be difficult, handwashing with soap can be easy. The input required is relatively minimal (water, soap and enthusiasm), while the output and benefits are substantial – and you can do it nearly anywhere, be it Basra or Baghdad.



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# Highlights

- Focus on schools
- National drawing competition
- Children promoting change!



## JAPAN The Global Handwashing Dance

In 2009, the Japan Committee for UNICEF produced a dance in 2009 showing the proper way to wash your hands *without using lyrics!* The dance, by the nationally and globally famous dancer Kaiji Moriyama, is a step-by-step musical demonstration of handwashing with soap and uses movement without words to illustrate proper handwashing. The implications of a song with no lyrics are impressive – anyone, anywhere in the world, regardless of language, can learn proper handwashing from the dance.

But the dance didn't stop there – it went global! Countries around the world, like Madagascar, Cambodia, and Laos used the original steps of the dance and added their own flair, reproducing it locally and dancing to their own beats. Just imagine people all over the world dancing their way to good hand hygiene, from Asia to Latin America and everywhere in between, and you can understand how global the dancing message can be. No translation required: just follow the steps to dance your way to clean hands.



## INDONESIA Nationwide success

Global Handwashing Day in Indonesia employs extensive partnerships and events across the country to get the handwashing with soap message out, changing attitudes and behaviours in the process, from the smallest schoolchild to the biggest governmental minister.

Year-round water, sanitation and hygiene education (WASH) programming, already implemented in the school system, is supplemented by special events for Global Handwashing Day, at scale, around the country. Competitions for jingles, drawings and poems; dramas depicting proper handwashing with soap; and quizzes to test good-hygiene knowledge – all of these took place during the months leading up to Global Handwashing Day, when many award ceremonies were held in schools to recognize the contest winners.

To meet special circumstances in Padang, which had been affected by a recent earthquake, hygiene kits were distributed to schoolchildren, and handwashing with soap in difficult situations was discussed and demonstrated during Global Handwashing Day events.

To complement this work in the schools, a training session for government ministers was held in the capital, focusing on policy implications and sensitizing officials to the importance of handwashing with soap in preventing disease – and how handwashing with soap benefits the whole country through a healthier population. The World Health Organization, the Water and Sanitation Program, national NGOs and representatives from the private sector were all in attendance. TV and other media spots helped spread the Global Handwashing Day word, gaining the most visibility and sustainability possible from a single-day event.

By reaching out to populations and focusing on two ends of the spectrum – government personnel and schoolchildren – Indonesia celebrated a greatly successful Global Handwashing Day, promoting handwashing with soap for the future (with children) and handwashing with soap for today (with the government). This two-pronged approach leads to one outcome – a happy Global Handwashing Day, encouraging more handwashing with soap, all around the country.



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# Highlights

- Global Handwashing Day-inspired poetry and drama
- Training for government ministers
- Hygiene kits for earthquake survivors.



## For the record . . .

Some countries joined the race to set Guinness World Records for handwashing with soap:

- In Chennai, India, 15,000 children organized for an attempt at the “most people simultaneously washing hands” world record.
- Bangladesh tried to make history in handwashing with soap at the same time, with an attempt involving 50,000 children.
- In Bamako, Mali, the Minister of Health was the master of ceremonies, overseeing a record attempt of 10,000 children simultaneously washing their hands with soap.
- South Africa also took a shot at the record, gathering nearly 2,000 schoolchildren for an attempt at the simultaneous handwashing in the same place world record.







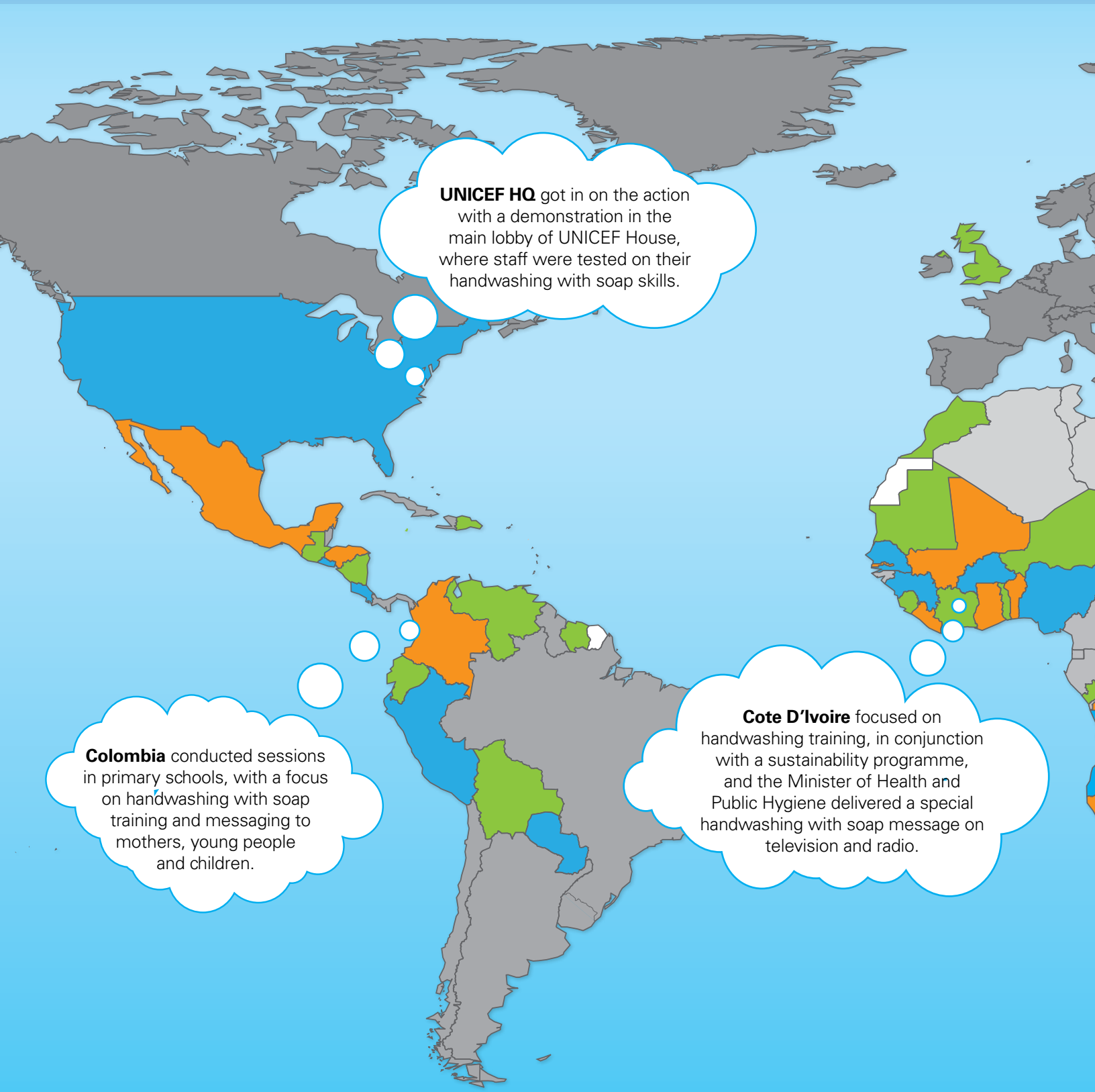
# Conclusion

Global Handwashing Day is more than just a day, and handwashing with soap should be a healthy behaviour for a lifetime. The message, the campaign and the tremendous impact of handwashing with soap are poised to inspire new waves of national consciousness and action.

The celebrations described in this report demonstrate just a few of the ways to make handwashing fun and plant the seeds of lifelong behaviour change. We've gathered these stories from countless accomplishments, in more than 80 countries, and hope they inspire future campaigns. As we celebrate the success of Global Handwashing Day around the world, we call for renewed commitment to spreading the word on handwashing with soap. To 15 October and beyond – happy handwashing!

# Around the world with Global Handwashing Day

There were so many countries that participated in Global Handwashing Day that they barely all fit on a map. Here are just a few examples by region from the countries that celebrated Global Handwashing Day



**UNICEF HQ** got in on the action with a demonstration in the main lobby of UNICEF House, where staff were tested on their handwashing with soap skills.

**Colombia** conducted sessions in primary schools, with a focus on handwashing with soap training and messaging to mothers, young people and children.

**Cote D'Ivoire** focused on handwashing training, in conjunction with a sustainability programme, and the Minister of Health and Public Hygiene delivered a special handwashing with soap message on television and radio.

**Hungary's** National Committee for UNICEF organized a dance in schools, accompanied with music by The Wiggles; the motto was, *Wash with soap and water, your hands are clean, you're ready to eat!*

**Mongolia** had puppet shows on handwashing at Global Handwashing Day launch schools.

**Egypt** created a handwashing poster that other countries in the region used for their own handwashing with soap communications.

**China** engaged in a busy day of handwashing, with activities and demonstrations in many provinces and a special focus on areas affected by the earthquake in Sichuan Province.

**Djibouti** hosted a radio panel with doctors and government ministers and representatives to discuss the importance of handwashing. Mass handwashing events at schools complemented these high-level activities.

**Nepal** sent out postcards to schools, reminding students and teachers about the importance of handwashing with soap and focusing on a community-inclusive approach to hygiene.

**Mozambique** mobilized children in 110 schools nationwide to remind their families and communities to wash their hands with soap and water at crucial times.

**Papua New Guinea** celebrated Global Handwashing Day with dramatic presentations and a handwashing essay competition among 20,000 schoolchildren.



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