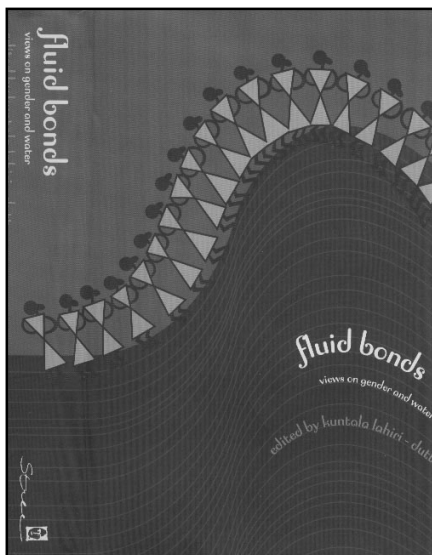


books



The Handwashing Handbook: A Guide for Developing a Hygiene Promotion Programme to Increase Handwashing with Soap

Beth Scott, Valerie Curtis, Jason Cardosi
2005, World Bank, Washington,
76pp, can be downloaded from
www.globalhandwashing.org

Considering the critical importance of improved hygiene behaviour as an integral component of effective sanitation, it is surprising how little prominence this plays in the majority of sanitation-related literature. But, the importance of hygiene promotion software as the sister of sanitation hardware is slowly gaining ground, thanks to publications such as this new *Handwashing Handbook* produced in collaboration by the World Bank–Netherlands Water Partnership (BNWP) and the Water and Sanitation Programme.

The handbook focuses on the single most important behavioural change that has proved to be essential to reduce two of the leading causes of childhood mortality – diarrhoeal disease and acute respiratory infections. The simple act of washing hands with soap can have a major impact on public health and this handbook draws together experiences from the Global Public–Private Partnership for Handwashing and lays down an approach for promoting handwashing on a large scale. It is based on practical experience, but supported by rigorous

scientific research, which is particularly valuable in an area that is often prone to misperceptions about health risks based upon basic misunderstandings about disease transmission routes.

The approach for implementation proposed in the guide is based upon a market-based model, which essentially treats target communities not as ‘beneficiaries’ but as ‘consumers’. This approach is fundamentally different from traditional didactic approaches towards hygiene and sanitation promotion that are commonly adopted in the design of water supply and sanitation programmes. It is based upon principles of social marketing, which consider a much broader set of factors that influence an individual’s behaviours rather than simplistic understanding of attitudes towards illness.

The methodology is grounded upon a thorough understanding of sanitation-related behavioural patterns and the complex socio-cultural beliefs related to the hygiene behaviour of potential customers. It recognizes that these are invariably only partially related to a true understanding of the linkages between illness and health risks associated with sanitation. Many hygiene behaviour patterns will be socially programmed and related to status, well-being and so on, and a market-based approach seeks to focus upon disseminating and communicating the right messages to different consumer groups in a way in which they are positively stimulated to adopt a change in their behaviour.

The handbook presents these arguments clearly and concisely and lays down a practical framework for the design and implementation guidelines of a hygiene promotion programme to increase handwashing with soap. The guide is compact and structured into four sections that clearly define the different components of a national handwashing programme.

The first section focuses on ‘Laying the foundation for a national handwashing programme’ and describes the key actors that need to be involved in the programme design and its implementation. A public–private partnership model is presented which includes government agencies, NGOs, water utilities as well as private companies as key actors for the successful implementation of the programme. The handbook stresses the importance of soap manufacturers in the partnership, but also includes other manufacturers and retailers of plastic containers and handwashing buckets, tanks and pipes as well as toilet paper and other products associated with the use of the latrine as other stakeholders from the private sector.

To design the marketing programme, it is essential to have a good understanding of the different consumer groups and this is the

topic of the second section. This is much more problematic and time consuming than one would expect. For example, in Ghana, during a trial research study, although 75 per cent said that they washed their hands after using the toilet, in fact observations suggested that only 3 per cent actually did! Therefore, great care and attention needs to be taken to ensure that the hygiene promotion campaign is not based upon fundamental misapprehensions such as this.

The third and final sections describe the stages of ‘Programme implementation’ and ‘Programme organization’. Programme implementation summarizes the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches to communication of hygiene messages. It also describes the all-important and potentially problematic monitoring and evaluation component, which must be designed in order to see if the handwashing campaign is bringing about the desired result – i.e. more regular handwashing and the use of soap in the domestic environment.

The section on programme organization focuses mainly on advocacy in order to get the right institutions and organizations on board in a partnership at an early stage in programme design. This is not without potential problems. For instance, it cannot be assumed that private companies will be immediately interested and it will be especially important to negotiate the finances of the programme. This section also discusses the importance of ensuring a shared understanding and effective communications between these different actors about the roles and responsibility of each in the programme.

The handbook does not provide a blueprint and openly acknowledges that there are many hurdles that will need to be overcome, both before and during the initiation, development and implementation of a national handwashing programme. In particular, as it focuses on implementation at a wide scale, it also remains a challenge to incorporate best practices at the project level in a way that is affordable and viable within the time scale of the project.

The ITDG Online Development Bookshop

Selected titles can be ordered direct from the ITDG Publishing online bookshop at:
<http://www.developmentbookshop.com>.
Alternatively, for mail order send to ITDG Publishing, The Schumacher Centre for Technology and Development, Bourton Hall, Bourton-on-Dunsmore, Rugby CV23 9QZ, UK;
Fax: +44 (0) 1926 634502;
email: orders@itpubs.org.uk

Notwithstanding these hurdles, the arguments that underlie the conceptual framework and the proposed methodology on which this manual is founded make so much sense that it makes one wonder why this thinking has not already become entrenched in sanitation programmes. One can only hope that in the future, many more governments, donors and implementing agencies will wake up to the importance of handwashing with soap as a core component, not just an add-on, to sanitation programmes. Towards this object, this publication is very welcome indeed and should be included in the working library of every sanitation practitioner. You can find out more about the 'Global Public-Private Partnership for Handwashing with Soap' and download a copy of the handbook from the internet at www.globalhandwashing.org. If you would like to request a hard copy, please send an email to whelpdesk@worldbank.org.

*Jonathan Parkinson
Independent consultant, Sanitation and
wastewater management specialist*

Fluid Bonds: Views on gender and water

Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt (ed.)
2006, Stree Publishers, Rs 650,
ISBN No: 81-85604-70-3, 464 pages

Fluid Bonds brings together a wide range of experts who, using different approaches, deal with diverse issues, all of which are strung together with one common theme: gender and water.

For several years now development and other organizations have been trying to bring into the mainstream of water management gender concerns, to give recognition to the problems of women on water-related issues and their involvement. Insight into how this can be done, and the adversities that women from different climatic zones around the world face in addressing the whole spectrum of issues is provided in the book through various examples.

The book is categorized into four parts: Global discourses on Gender and Water; Gendered Water in Times and Places; Gendered Cultures and Economies of Water; and Representations and Agency of Women in Water. Each chapter discusses different aspects in different scenarios, coming from places as far afield as the Andes, Australia, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, the US, South Africa and Vietnam.

The book contains several interesting examples. A paper describes the important, yet invisible and unrecognized role women play in the fishing industry in Australia and the activism undertaken to change this. It records the problems faced by women in

rural India and the conflict they have with men over access to water. It underscores the need for involving women in participatory irrigation management while recognizing their domestic responsibilities as well. The case from Bangladesh relates to how the arsenic problem in that country has increased the burden of women in meeting domestic water needs. Themselves victims of arsenic poisoning, women often choose to take water from arsenic-contaminated wells rather than endure the extra work required to access arsenic-free water. Moreover, these arsenic-affected women face social ostracism and often do not seek medical treatment.

There are encouraging examples of women taking initiatives and being included as well. For instance, Stella Mendoza, as President of the Board of Directors of the Imperial Irrigation District, Imperial Valley, California succeeded in mobilizing the community around the symbolism of water at the height of a water crisis, with consequences that led to policy change in western USA. The paper by Barbara Van Koppen and others presents a case where agricultural production relations in programmes in Sekhukhune district, South Africa are perhaps more gender-equitable than elsewhere in the world.

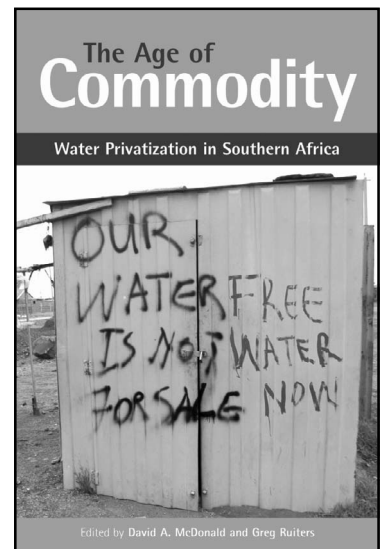
The book is multi-dimensional, strong on research and information, and is of use to researchers. However, the language may just make it a little obscure for a water practitioner to benefit from.

*Indira Khurana is a Documentation
Expert with WASMO, New Delhi*

Smart Sanitation Solutions – Examples of innovative, low-cost technologies for toilets, collection, transportation, treatment and use of sanitation products

2006, Netherlands Water Partnership, 68 pp, available for free download from <http://www.irc.nl/page/28448>

This small book is a follow-on from *Smart Water Solutions*, and is produced by five Dutch organizations, WASTE, PRACTICA, SIMAVI, IRC and Partners for Water. A 'smart' sanitation solution is defined as one that is adapted to local conditions and adaptable to a changing environment. For example, the same technology may be 'smart' in a Mexican city but not be adequate when applied in an Indian slum. A variety of technologies are offered and described, not in a prescriptive way, rather by way of providing inspiration.



The Age of Commodity – Water privatization in Southern Africa

David A. McDonald and Greg Ruiters
2005, London, Earthscan,
£22.95

The Age of Commodity provides an overview of the debates over water in the Southern Africa region, including a conceptual overview of water 'privatization,' how it relates to human rights, macro-economic policy and GATS. The book then presents case studies of important water privatization initiatives in the region, drawing out crucial themes common to water privatization debates around the world, including corruption, gender equity and donor conditionalities.

The technologies are grouped under the categories: toilets, collection, transportation, treatment and using sanitation products. Each technology is illustrated by full-page colour photographs, and the text gives the conditions appropriate for the technology (e.g. rural or urban, arid or flood-prone) as well as approximate cost, and their advantages and disadvantages. Two case studies round off the discussion.

The main questions that one is left with after reading this useful and informative book are: how many people are using these technologies, and where are they being taken up on a large scale?

Clare Tawney, Editor