

Hand Hygiene for All

A whole of society approach to achieving universal hand hygiene and stopping the spread of COVID-19

The challenge

Hand hygiene is the first defense against COVID-19. Yet for so many people, it is out of reach.

- 3 billion people / 40% of global population do not have a place at home to wash their hands with water and soap.
- In the most vulnerable countries, the majority of the population – roughly 1 billion people – is at immediate risk of COVID-19 due to lack of basic handwashing facilities.
- 43% of health care facilities do not have hand hygiene at points of care.
- Nearly half of all schools do not have handwashing facilities with water and soap. This affects 900 million school-age children.

The opportunity

COVID-19 response is a chance to reimagine hand hygiene in society.

- COVID-19 response plans for safe return to work and school = unique chance to institutionalize hand hygiene into systems to reduce the risk of future outbreaks.
- New WHO-UNICEF WASH technical guidelines, interim recommendation for mandatory hand hygiene, and Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan explain how to do it.
- Focus on behaviour and awareness is very high: we must make it possible through hardware, devices, water supply, soap as well as systems and institutions to deliver handwashing

The whole of society approach

To make hand hygiene accessible and habitual, we all have a role to play.

- **Plans for different settings:** health care facilities, schools and child care centers, workplaces, transport hubs, households, institutions, places of worship
- **Collective action:** key international organizations, national and local governments, development banks, NGOs, entrepreneurs and private sector, employers, civil society, and academic partners
- **Country action:** accelerate global action on hand hygiene in support of country roadmaps and targets. Country Leadership is essential.

Get involved

- **Advocate** globally and locally including with civil society and multi-stakeholder groups
- **Include** hand hygiene progress updates on access, behaviour, country case studies in reports, meetings, events.
- **Commit** to increasing and streamlining hand hygiene within your organization and programming.
- **Share** joint statement, public brief, and key messages on social media channels.