



SolutionMUS
delivering water's promise

Handwashing Stations: Convenient and Health

November 23, 2010

“The station is helpful to me because it means my children can wash their hands by themselves without my help,” said Moussa Abdou, a farmer in the village of Sara Sara, Zinder Region, Niger. Moussa built the station over 14 months ago, after Winrock International field agents from the Multiple-Use Water Services (MUS) project taught about the importance of handwashing with soap throughout his village.

Under the Multiple-Use Water Services (MUS) approach, the project had already brought two new water points to Moussa's village (at a hardware cost of approximately \$2,000 USD) but Moussa stressed that his own investment in a tin can and plastic teapot (approximately 71 cents) for use as a handwashing station was just as important in improving his health. On its own, handwashing with soap at the two critical moments (before eating and after using the toilet) can reduce the incidence of diarrhea by almost 50%. In comparison, improving water sources reduces the incidence of diarrhea by 25%. Together, improved water sources and handwashing with soap can have a real impact on health.

In Zinder, MUS field agents use images and theater to share critical messages about hygiene and handwashing with men, women, and children. As a result of these interventions, 800 households in 61 villages have bought and installed handwashing stations over the lifetime of the project. The MUS team



chose to promote a design using a simple tin can because the cans are locally available and affordable. The ubiquitous cans also serve as a visual reminder to wash one's hands. Not only that, they last too: Surprise visits by evaluators two months and nine months after installation showed that, respectively, 86% and 46% of households continue to use their stations.

And they're not just for children. Adults use the hand-washing stations as well. Of those still using the station after nine months, 100% said they washed their hands with soap more frequently than before using the station, an average of 3.5 times per day. Children, like Moussa's son Chazali, use the station with soap an average of 2.5 times per day.



The Niger MUS project was implemented by Winrock International and financed by USAID and the Coca Cola Foundation under the WAWI and WADA partnerships, from 2008-2010.

Winrock International is a nonprofit organization that works with people in the United States and around the world to empower the disadvantaged, increase economic opportunity, and sustain natural resources.



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