



Water and Hygiene

By Leslie Hawthorne-Klingler

How often do you wash your hands? Do you wash your hands before you eat? After using the restroom? Before preparing food? When you wash, do you scrub for at least ten seconds with soap and water? Parents, do you insist that your children follow the same practices?

In late 2005, the American Society for Microbiology conducted a survey of over 6,000 adults in public restrooms around the country. The survey found that although 91 percent of adults said they wash their hands after using public restrooms, only 83 percent actually did so. **Overall, women washed their hands 90 percent of the time, while men washed theirs only 75 percent of the time!**

Fortunately, in the U.S., failing to wash one's hands rarely leads to more than a minor cold or flu. Our culture has established enough disease blocking practices—such as customs and technologies that promote safe food preparation (e.g., clean kitchens, refrigerators)—to mitigate the consequences of our occasional careless hygiene practices. However, this is not the case in developing countries.

In many countries, simply failing to wash one's hands often leads to fatal infection or disease. Thousands of children die every day of preventable diseases because they and others in their community have not been trained in the simple methods of blocking them.

Hygiene training is a vital companion to the introduction of safe water. Improving a community's water supply generally reduces the incidence of diarrhea by approximately 15 percent. When improved water is combined with the introduction of hygienic practices, diarrhea incidences decline by up to 65 percent! For this reason Lifewater stresses that it helps people to not only **access** safe water, but also to **use** that water well.

Lifewater's *Community Health through Hygiene Program* trains our Volunteer Trainers and partner organizations to teach good hygiene. By communicating people's value in Christ (every life is a life worth saving), explaining disease transmission and blocking techniques, and demonstrating the skills necessary for healthful practices, new safe water sources are more effective in fighting disease.

Our partner organizations overseas welcome Lifewater's hygiene training. They are acutely aware of the need for improved hygiene in the communities where they work to provide safe water. For example, the Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church recently conducted a study of 3,817 households in 29 Ethiopian communities. The study showed that, in a region where one in every six children dies before the age of five (a high percentage of them die from diarrheal diseases), only 37 percent of those studied wash their hands adequately and only 18 percent use soap. The report concluded that hygiene training is crucial and should be an important part of their work.

By training partners such as the Kale Heywet Church, Lifewater's *Community Health through Hygiene Program* is saving thousands of lives around the world. Read more about the program on page two, and check our website for important updates on Lifewater's work in this area.

Left: Children in Kenya teach each other to wash their hands using a water-saving device called a "tippy-tap."



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Spring 2006

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Partnering to Save Lives using Lifewater's Community Health through Hygiene Program in Kenya

By Janet Proby, Programs Director and Hygiene Program Coordinator

The success of Lifewater's training programs depends on the quality of our partners and their ability to adapt Lifewater's programs to their communities. A glimpse into the daily lives of one of our Kenya partners, GWAKO Ministries, reveals their excellence in implementing the *Community Health through Hygiene* training they have received from Lifewater.

GWAKO's motto, "Christians help rural women help themselves" is at the core of the organization's success. With Lifewater's help, GWAKO has focused on training local school teachers and members of women's self-help groups. This has proven to be a fruitful strategy.

Two Lifewater-trained nurses, Elizabeth Ochieng and Mrs. Olima, head up GWAKO's hygiene program in the Kisumu region. I was privileged to meet them this past January when they hosted a Lifewater hygiene training team of which I was a member.

I have vivid memories of my time with Elizabeth and Mrs. Olima. I remember traveling with them in the back of a pick-up truck to see the impact of their hygiene trainings in several schools and individual homes. Bouncing along, they excitedly shared about their work in a total of forty-one different schools and surrounding communities.

Our visits to the schools and communities were right in line with Elizabeth and Mrs. Olima's work, as follow-up is an important part of the GWAKO hygiene training program. Their follow-up visits provide the 100-plus promoters they have trained with encouragement and additional training.

Along the way, everyone in the truck could be heard singing, "I Will Never Cease to Praise My Lord" and other praise songs. Mrs. Olima encouraged everyone to lead a song. Prayer and praise is an important component in all of GWAKO's work.

Earlier that morning, Elizabeth had already worked her regular job at an X-ray lab before meeting up with us. She routinely works from 7:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. when not attending to her GWAKO responsibilities. A widow raising a teenage son and two of her deceased sister's children, she has even managed to get certified in counseling and take a course in information technology.

Mrs. Olima is also a remarkable person. Her husband is a retired school teacher with very little compensation. A mother of eight children ranging from ten to thirty-three, she still manages to dedicate quality time to her work with GWAKO.



Above: Elizabeth evaluates a river water sample - the only water source for the local community.

As we bounced along, I marveled at Elizabeth and Mrs. Olima's dedication and commitment to their hygiene work. They had just spent three weeks co-hosting trainings with our Lifewater team.

Students excitedly greeted us when we arrived at one of the ten schools where the GWAKO drill crew, who was also trained by Lifewater, has installed wells. I was glad to see a "tippy tap"—a water-saving device that allows students to wash their hands after using the latrine and before eating—hanging on a nearby tree. One of the GWAKO-trained hygiene teachers explained that they are teaching the children about washing hands, washing food, and good nutrition. She said that the children then take the information to their parents and grandparents so it can be put into practice in the home.

At another school, the students entertained us with singing and dancing. I watched as Elizabeth and Mrs. Olima jumped up and joined the students, much to the delight of the assembled children. I could sense Elizabeth and Mrs. Olima's love for the people surrounding them, and I knew what these two women already knew: they were making a difference in the lives of many people, and that was all the reward they needed!

GWAKO Ministries is Lifewater International's partner in Kisumu, Kenya, under the direction of director Benjamin Ooyo. GWAKO has been a Lifewater partner since 1999 and has Lifewater-trained well drilling, hygiene, and sanitation teams. The collaboration between Lifewater and GWAKO in 2005–2006 is being funded in part by the US Agency of International Development (USAID).



Preventing Preventable Disease

If good hygiene makes such a difference in people's health, why are these practices not more widespread? Lifewater has learned that training people in simple ways to prevent disease is not as simple as it may seem:

To prevent disease, people need to know their worth. In many cultures, the weaker members of the population—especially girls and women and those who are handicapped—are not considered valuable. Because resources are so scarce, little is expended to educate them, keep them healthy, or make them well when they become ill. The first step to community health is instilling in people the incredible value God has placed on all human life.

To prevent disease, people must understand disease transmission. If people are not convinced that feces and mosquitoes can cause disease, there is no value in introducing hand washing, latrines, or mosquito nets. Before learning lifesaving hygienic practices, people must be convinced of the value of these practices.

To prevent disease, people must be empowered. Many people around the world believe that they have no control over their health. In addition to knowing what causes disease, they need to learn that simple lifestyle changes can prevent it.

To prevent disease, people need the necessary skills and tools. Once people know the importance of hygienic practices, they need the skills and tools necessary to practice them. Safe water is essential. Equally important are hygiene and sanitation skills such as hand washing, safe food preparation, and latrine construction and maintenance.

The Importance of Lifewater's Training for Rural Guatemala

By Miriam de Maldonado, Hands for Peacemaking Foundation, Guatemala

In most of the rural communities of Barillas, Guatemala, a high percentage of the children get sick from contaminated water and bad hygiene habits. The reason for the latter is that there has been little to no education about hygiene, and therefore the people there are not aware of its importance.

During the Lifewater participatory hygiene training in San Luis Obispo, I learned that contamination can be eliminated in the daily life of any community around the world. When we have enough resources we see hygiene as part of our normal routine. We often judge people who don't have clean water as lazy, but the reality is different. These people need our help.

Lifewater taught us simple but effective ways to educate with resources that villagers have on hand. Something even more special is, **in the process of helping people, we find an open door to teach them the spiritual principles that show how God is also interested in our health.**

The typical illnesses that the children of Barillas get because of contamination are diarrhea and intestinal parasites and amoebas. Most of them get better after a week, but **because of the scarce resources and poor living conditions of the families, these types of sicknesses can cause death.**

Hands for Peacemaking's goal in the area of hygiene is to train and educate people in the 250-plus villages around Barillas in order to prevent illness and improve overall health.

As I write this article, I remember with love and admiration all the people from Lifewater who taught us with professionalism and patience.



Quick Facts about Lifewater's Community Health through Hygiene Program

- In 1999, Trudy Harper, R.N, B.S.N, began developing a hygiene program to complement Lifewater's existing Well Drilling and Hand Pump Repair Programs.
- In 2003, Lifewater named Janet Proby, M.Ed. and specialist in curriculum development, as director of the new Hygiene Program.
- In 2004, Lifewater Volunteer Trainers and partners conducted 220 hygiene trainings worldwide. By the end of the year over 50 percent of Lifewater's partners had been trained in Lifewater's Hygiene Program.
- In 2005, Lifewater renamed the program *Community Health through Hygiene* and began professionalizing its training curriculum.

In the same year, Lifewater conducted seven trainings in the U.S. in its *Community Health through Hygiene Program*, training a total of 116 individuals. Of these, 40 were Lifewater Volunteer Trainers preparing to pass along their knowledge to partner organizations internationally. The other 76 participants represented 28 non-profit organizations such as Living Water International, Water for People, and Saddleback Church seeking to complement their work with Lifewater's *Community Health through Hygiene Program*.

Lifewater's international partners trained over 120,000 people in life-saving hygiene knowledge and skills in 2005!

- The program now has 15 Lead Trainers, Volunteer Trainers from North America who are capable of leading training in Lifewater's programs around the world. Before becoming Lead Trainers, these individuals were required to attend advanced hygiene training sessions and participate in a number of hygiene training trips internationally.

If you are interested in supporting Lifewater's *Community Health through Hygiene Program* or becoming involved as a Volunteer Trainer, please contact the Lifewater office at 805-541-6634 or 888-543-6634. We welcome your involvement in this exciting program!



Sample Community Health through Hygiene Lesson

Making a "Tippy Tap"- Simple, Affordable, and Fun!

The "Tippy Tap" pictured here is a simple device that enables people to wash their hands with a small amount of water. It is made of materials found in almost any community: a jug, a small plastic water bottle, string, and soap.

If you would like to get an idea of what people around the world are learning, look for Tippy Tap building instructions on our website (www.lifewater.org) and try building this device yourself or with a small group.



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“The first step in community health is instilling in people the incredible value God has placed on all human life.” Psalm 139: 13-16



In the Field

ECUADOR (3/18-4/2) Peter Rynning, Pricilla Rynning, Kathy Borland, and Sue Morris will be traveling to Ecuador to conduct Lifewater’s Community Health through Hygiene Program. One training will be held on the coast and another will be held in the jungle. Several individuals from organizations that work throughout Ecuador such as The European Union, The International Organization of Migration, and The Ministry of Agriculture will attend the training.

KENYA (4/4-4/24) Dwayne Lee and Gary Mitchell will be training Lifewater’s partner GWAKO, Groups of Women in Agriculture, in Lifewater’s Hand Pump Repair Program.

UGANDA (4/28-5/13) Tim Penny, David Gibson, Robert Anders, and Phoebe Lansing-Lee will be conducting biosand filter training with Lifewater partners in Uganda. Marge Rau will be joining the team later to facilitate the Community Health through Hygiene training.

Upcoming Training Trips

PHILIPPINES (Late Spring) Berle Taylor will be leading a team consisting of Volunteer Trainers Stan Ostrom and Glen Frachiseur to conduct a training in Lifewater’s Advanced Drilling Program and share some tools for small business development.

SOUTHEAST ASIA (June) Rod Thompson will be leading a team to train our long-time partner in Lifewater’s Advanced Drilling Program and Advanced Community Health through Hygiene Program. The team is also working out the possibility of biosand filter training.

REGIONAL PARTNERS’ CONFERENCE (6/8-6/18) Pat Klever, Kevin Klever, Dan Stevens, Sam Moore, Kirk Schauer, and Jeff Bjorck will be traveling to Zambia for the second Lifewater Regional Partners’ Conference. Lifewater partners from all over East and Southern Africa including Uganda, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Kenya, Zambia, and Mozambique will be coming together for nine days of participatory trainings, debriefs, and networking.

Please pray
for Volunteer
Trainers in
the field...