



# Sri Lanka Hand Hygiene Snapshot

## JMP 2020 data: household, school and HCF overview



### Household

JMP reports insufficient data.

# 10.1%

of households in Sri Lanka didn't have sufficient access to soap and/or water to wash their hands<sup>1</sup> when needed during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic



### Health Care Facility (HCF)

JMP reports insufficient data.

# 97%

Studies indicate that Maternal and Child Health (MCH) clinics without hand washing facilities at the examination room (with availability of piped water, community water projects)



### School

JMP reports insufficient data.

A 2015 Knowledge, Attitude, Practice, Behaviour (KAPB) study<sup>2</sup> to assess the effectiveness of the School Health Promotion Programme (SHPP) reveals that students don't or only sometimes use soap when washing hands during school or after defecating in school. Soap is often lacking in canteens and toilets. A census of Early Childhood Development Centers (ECDC)<sup>3</sup>, indicated that 88.7% of children washed their hands before meals, 77.6% after using the toilet and 41.1% after playing, however the use of soap is not captured



### Estates and low income urban settlements

Individuals in estate communities and high-density urban settlements are considered as some of the most vulnerable populations in Sri Lanka. One study shows that estate households spend less on personal care and health related expenses (which includes expenses for soap used for hand washing)<sup>4</sup>



1 Covid-19 Crisis Household Impact Sri Lanka: Telephone Survey Round 2 (May 30th – June 7th, 2020), UNDP and UNICEF

2 Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices Behavior (KAPB) Study on School WASH program <https://www.unicef.org/srilanka/reports/knowledge-attitudes-practices-behavior-kapb-study-school-wash-program>

3 The National Census of Early Childhood Development Centers in Sri Lanka (2016)

4 [https://www.cbsl.gov.lk/sites/default/files/cbslweb\\_documents/statistics/otherpub/ess\\_2019\\_e.pdf](https://www.cbsl.gov.lk/sites/default/files/cbslweb_documents/statistics/otherpub/ess_2019_e.pdf)

## Enabling environment

	<b>Policies</b>	The National Policy on Sanitation refers to providing education on the principles of hygiene and related practices, including washing of hands.
	<b>Financing</b>	There is no separate budget line for hygiene
	<b>Coordination</b>	There is an informal Technical Working Group on hygiene
	<b>Monitoring</b>	Sri Lanka has national level data on water and sanitation coverage. Monitoring indicators on handwashing are not always included in government monitoring mechanisms, household surveys, and data management and information systems for health and schools. However, the school-based health accreditation system includes indicators on hand hygiene, which contributes to the health status of the school.
	<b>Capacity</b>	<p>Ministry of Education appointed health focal persons at provincial and zonal levels to support WASH related activities in schools including training. In addition, 600 municipal waste collectors were trained on hand hygiene</p> <p>Hygiene promotion training was organized by Urban Settlement Development Authority targeted to development officers to conduct hygiene promotion in high density urban settlements. Six hygiene promotion sessions were conducted among 288 families reaching 15,000 beneficiaries.</p>



## Hand hygiene behaviour change approaches

Participatory approaches are used to promote hygiene behavioural change including school sanitation and hygiene education. Handwashing in schools is often promoted through Child to Child approaches, schools health clubs, drama, songs poems, hand-washing instruction leaflets, hand-washing demonstrations and distributing bars of soap. Global Handwashing Day is an opportunity for children to learn about the importance of handwashing and proper hand washing techniques. Area public health inspectors are also involved in the event. In 2015, Sri Lanka won a Guinness World Records title for the most participants in a hand washing relay to mark Global Handwashing Day.

During their house to house visits, Public Health Midwives (PHMs) promote hand hygiene before breast feeding. Mother clubs also promote hand hygiene before breast feeding, before feeding a child and after handling child faeces. Hygiene is addressed in plantations and estates through a World Bank funded programme.

## Hand hygiene technologies and products

Sri Lanka has a number of national manufacturers and suppliers of soap as well as international brands. Innovations in hand washing devices include using sensor taps, pedal operated taps as well as rainwater in water scarce areas. Schools are working with private sector partners to secure their support for school WASH.



## Hand hygiene response to COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 crisis provided an opportunity to improve WASH facilities in primary healthcare centers, early childhood centers, schools and in high-density, low-capacity urban settlements.

Ministries of Education and Health played a key role in establishing and operationalizing systems and standards for safe school operations benefiting 4.2 million children nation-wide. The importance of hand hygiene was promoted to all the school community (including all teachers, children and parents). In a number of provinces two health teachers trained on infection and prevention control were appointed per school (usually every school has one but this was increased after COVID-19 pandemic). UNICEF also supported the development of “The Instruction Manual of Preparedness of schools and other Educational Institutes to prevent the spread of COVID-19,” which includes a low-cost handwashing station that was installed in schools across the country and is contributing towards efforts to sustain positive hygiene behaviours in schools. UNICEF supported hand washing facilities for vulnerable ECDCs in certain provinces. Routine monitoring mechanisms were established in most of the schools

UNICEF helped to procure and deliver critical hygiene and infection-prevention supplies to high-risk communities and treatment centers as well as support for 354 rural HCFs to enhance WASH facilities (such as handwashing facilities at the point of treatment) and completed rapid assessment on handwashing among MCH clinics island wide.

For low income settlements, Sri Lanka’s Urban Development Authority provided hand hygiene services in vulnerable high-density settlements. UNICEF supported establish 100 handwashing points in transport hubs, commercial and market places and public places in high risk areas.



United Nations Children's Fund  
Regional Office for South Asia  
P.O. Box 5815  
Lainchaur, Lekhnath Marg  
Kathmandu, Nepal

For more information reach out to ROSA Hand Hygiene focal point:  
Nicole Klaesener-Metzner, [nklaesener@unicef.org](mailto:nklaesener@unicef.org)  
<https://www.unicef.org/rosa/water-sanitation-and-hygiene-wash>