

MUM'S MAGIC HANDS

Africa storyboard



Strategic background

Oxfam and Unilever's Chief Sustainability Office carried out extensive research on handwashing practice in emergency contexts. We found **nurture** to be one of the most powerful motivators driving handwashing with soap among mothers. Even during a crisis, mothers continue to nurture their children to ensure they go onward in life and succeed in bringing fruition to their efforts and fulfillment to their lives. Handwashing fits into this narrative of 'nurture', leading to 'success'—not as a tool for good health, but rather as a part of a broader set of good manners like cutting nails, brushing and combing hair, honesty, hard work etc. that lead to living a good life.

Affiliation was also seen as a driver in emergency contexts. Mothers tend to unite together in emergencies, supporting each other and sharing resources. Other important elements for the story include the image of a dedicated spot for soap and water through very simple infrastructure, and the feeling of freshness from soap.

This central set of insights drive the creative idea shared in this presentation.

Central creative idea:

‘Mum’s magic hands’

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Mothers have magic hands. Hands that put their children to sleep, that clean them, that help them learn to walk, that comfort their little ones by gently stroking when they are in pain. Mothers' hands shape the very life of their children.

Hands are perfect metaphors that embody the lives of mothers and their heroic efforts to nurture their children against all odds. Hands, on the other hand, are the central protagonists of handwashing with soap (HWWS). The rational argument – of killing germs on the hands to prevent illness, cleanliness of hands etc. – are based on the way mothers use their hands in daily life, particularly in an emergency context.

The 'Mum's magic hands' idea brings both these ideas together. It has a powerful potential for becoming a driver in the promotion of handwashing with soap.

Frame 1



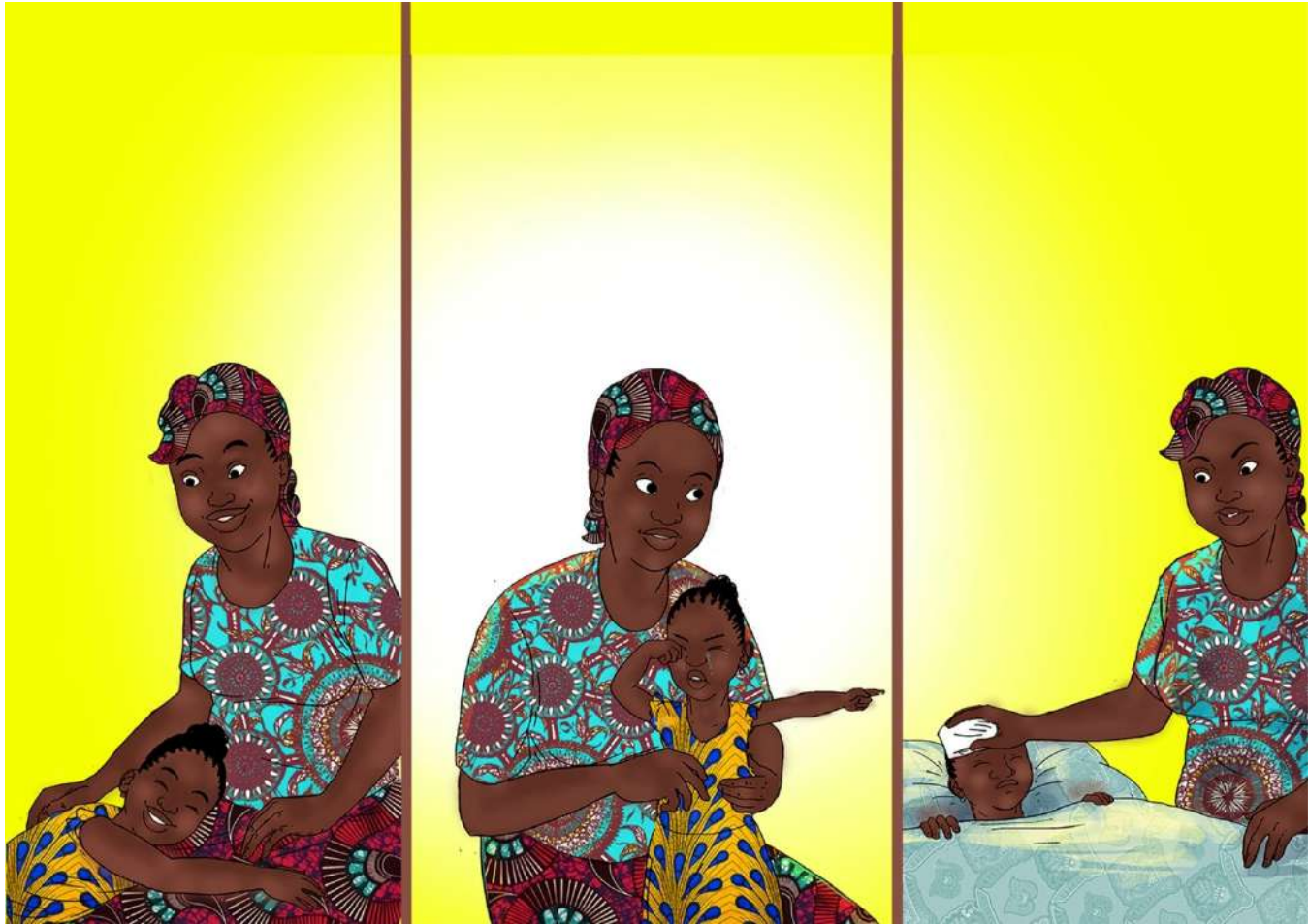
Frame 1

Intro: Magic Mum, magic hands

My mother is a 'magic Mum', and her hands are 'magic hands'.

To you, she may seem like any other mother and her hands may seem like any other hands. But for me, they are the most magical hands in the whole wide world.

Frame 2



Frame 2

Magic of Mum's hands

My Mum's magic hands pat me to sleep when I am restless, they wipe my tears when I cry and soothe me when I am sick...

Frame 3



Frame 3

Waking

My day usually begins with my Mum's hands gently nudging me awake. On some days they run over my face and tummy and tickle me awake, those magic hands of my Mum.

Frame 4



Frame 4

Magic hands

I open my eyes and see Mum's magic hands have already swept the floor. They wash and sweep and clean and cook almost effortlessly. I could spend hours watching her magic hands move.

Frame 5



Frame 5

Toilet – germs – illness – absentia – failure

Once I am up, I go to the toilet. The moment I come out of the toilet, my Mum ensures that I wash my hands with soap. I ask her why, and she explains that there are invisible germs on my hands which don't die when washed with plain water. This means I will fall sick and not be able to grow healthy and attend school once it re-opens.

Frame 6



Frame 6

Mimicking – soap – good health – success

Now that I understand, I wash my hands carefully. I imitate my Mum's magic hands as they rub the soap all over themselves, every little crevice and tip. After that our hands feel so fresh now that they are clean.

Frame 7



Frame 7

Hygiene manners

After this she would straight away march me to the bathing area, her magic hands pouring water and scrubbing me with soap.

Soon I feel fresh and clean. “You must always brush your teeth, comb your hair, clean your body and cut your nails. How else will you grow up to be a successful, respectable woman?” she says, while giving a last stroke to my hair with her magic hands.

Frame 8



Frame 8:

Eating + feeding + handwashing with soap

Soon I see my Mum preparing something to eat. I am so hungry, I run to her for food. If I forget to wash my hands with soap, my Mum reminds me – if you want to grow healthy and strong, you must wash hands with soap.

We wash our hands together again. I start eating by myself but soon persuade her to feed me. Food tastes so much better from her magic hands.

Frame 9



Frame 9

Behavioural manners

We walk back from the distribution. My mother is pleased as other mothers along the way admire my clean clothes. “How lovely your little girl looks. How do you manage to take care of your family, despite these difficult circumstances and being so busy?” they ask my Mum.

“Mum, see, they appreciate I am clean”. She replies, “Yes certainly, daughter, not only because you are clean but also because you are hardworking, well mannered and respect elders. You make me proud!” She pats me on the head lovingly with her magic hands. I close my eyes and smile.

Frame 10



Frame 10

Homework + success

School's not open yet but I can't wait to go back. While I wait for it to open, I like to practice the things I have already learned.

Mum sits next to me to listen while I practice my reading.

Frame 11



Frame 11

Cooking + handwashing with soap

After this comes my favorite part of the day – playtime. As I run off, I see Mum is washing her hands with soap before starting to cook. She never touches food without washing her hands, whether it is to prepare food, eat or to feed my brothers and sisters.

Frame 12



Frame 12

Dinner + handwashing with soap

As we sit down to have our meal, I remember to wash my hands with soap this time.

I tell Mum all about my day, about how I played with my friends and that I washed my hands with soap before coming to eat. She is overjoyed and pats me on my back, remarking what a good girl I am.

Frame 13



Frame 13

Sleep + success

After finishing my food and brushing my teeth, I lie down and I tell my Mum that at times I find it hard to remember what I read earlier.

She says it's just a matter of finding a smart way of reminding oneself. For example, 2 fingers for 2 occasions of handwashing with soap: before touching food and after going to the toilet. Two fingers, 2 occasions, I repeat to myself. I smile and fall asleep.

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Narrator asks:

Do you want to know what happened to this girl?

Frame 14



Frame 14

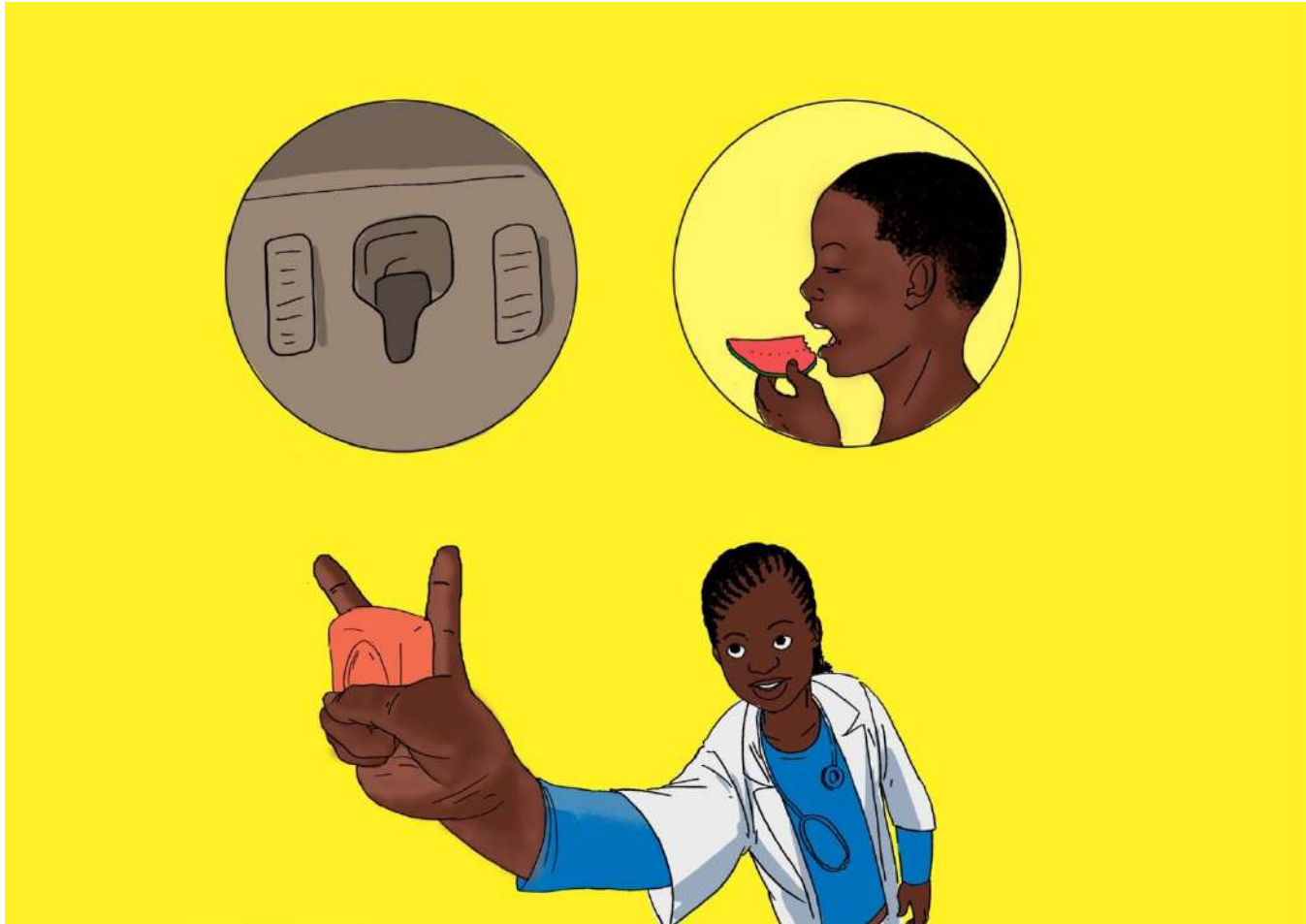
Doctor – the germs story

Today I am a doctor!

Many of my friends would fall ill when we were younger. Our surroundings made it difficult.

But not me, because of my Mum's insistence on washing hands with soap. When we wash with just plain water our hands look clean, but there are invisible germs which pass on from our hands and infect our children.

Frame 15



Frame 15

Recap occasions

Now, after all these years, my life is testimony to my Mum and her magic hands. So pay careful attention to these little things. As my Mum did, ensure that you instill good manners in your children and also the habit of handwashing with soap before eating and after going to the toilet.

And don't forget the other important times for Mums: before preparing food, before feeding your child and after cleaning your child's faeces. After all, it's your magic hands that shape the destiny of your child.

Frame 16



Frame 16

Final sign off Mum

Now each time people congratulate me on how well I have done, I always tell them I would not be where I am today had it not been for my Mum's magic hands.

They cared and looked after me during the tough and busy times. From the time I was a baby, grew up to become a child, and finally now that I'm a doctor, her magic hands nurtured and cared for me. My Mum's magic hands mean the world to me.

Thank you

Illustrations: Joseph Wanjara

With thanks to LightBox Studio, Kenya and to Centre of Gravity for inputs to design concepts