

Murphy, David F. (2009) Study on the UNICEF-UNILEVER Partnership for Hygiene Promotion in Primary Schools in Nigeria: final report. UNICEF Nigeria, Abuja, Nigeria.

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# **Study on the UNICEF-UNILEVER Partnership for Hygiene Promotion in Primary Schools in Nigeria**

## **FINAL REPORT**

**submitted by David F. Murphy**

**April 2009**

### **ABSTRACT**

This report outlines the main findings of a study on the UNICEF-Unilever Partnership for Hygiene Promotion in Primary Schools in Nigeria that was undertaken from 22 September to 31 October 2008.

The study reviewed the UNICEF-Unilever Nigeria Partnership as follows:

- Benefits of the partnership for Unilever Nigeria
- Benefits of the partnership for UNICEF Nigeria
- Other lessons learned by the partners particularly related to project planning and implementation

The study therefore focused on the dynamics of the relationship between UNICEF and Unilever as partners rather than the project's impact on beneficiaries.

Between 2005 and 2008, UNICEF collaborated with Unilever Nigeria Plc to promote handwashing with soap in selected primary schools in all 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), 222 focus communities and 111 focal Local Government Areas (2 schools per LGA; 6 schools per state).

UNICEF Nigeria brought more than 50 years of development cooperation experience in the country and the following additional competencies and contributions to the partnership with Unilever:

- Overall project coordination
- Resource mobilization
- Partnership facilitation
- Capacity building of government and community actors
- Public information and communications
- Project funding of US\$200,000

Unilever Nigeria brought a proven track record of partnerships with various non-profit organizations in the country and the following additional competencies and contributions to the partnership with UNICEF:

- Project funding of US\$ \$666,317, which represented almost 25% of Unilever's Community Assistance Programme budget for Nigeria during the 2005-07 period.

- In-kind contribution of 5,250 bars of branded soap for national and state project launches across the country.
- Human resources: Unilever Corporate Relations staff and company distributors around the country contributed time and travel costs for project-related activities, namely:
  - Attendance at national and/or state project launches
  - Participation by the Unilever Corporate Relations Manager in project monitoring through regular site visits
  - Provision of input by Unilever into IEC materials design

Three main implementation challenges related to both partnership dynamics and project management were identified:

- Differences in organizational cultures and capacities
- Strategic and practical issues related to the type and quantities of soap donated by Unilever
- Internal and external communication issues

The main benefits of the partnership for UNICEF included:

- Targeted scale-up on hygiene promotion
- Capacity development of government and community partners
- Enhanced UNICEF Nigeria understanding of how to work effectively with a major business actor in project delivery,
- Positive media coverage in Nigeria

The key benefits for Unilever Nigeria included:

- Reputational gain with key stakeholders
- Positive media coverage of Unilever's involvement
- Employee awareness about hygiene promotion
- Enhanced social capital
- Corporate citizenship reinforcement

Measurable financial bottom-line benefits in terms of increased profits for Unilever could not be identified.

Some of the broader benefits of the partnership include:

- Enhanced knowledge and capacity of school children to act as change agents for sustained behaviour change in hygiene practices in targeted schools and communities.
- Scaled-up hygiene promotion in school interventions in the country which in turn has offered the federal and state governments the opportunity to expand the campaign to cover all primary schools in Nigeria.
- Showcasing the value of public-private-collaboration for hygiene promotion in Nigeria, which has provided UNICEF, Government counterparts and the Nigerian private sector with a model for future partnerships on child health issues.

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## 1.0 Introduction

This report reviews the main findings of a study on the UNICEF-Unilever Partnership for Hygiene Promotion in Primary Schools in Nigeria conducted by UNICEF Consultant Dr. David F. Murphy from 22 September to 31 October 2008.

The report begins with an outline of the study focus, approach and methodology. The report continues with background information on the UNICEF-Unilever partnership, the two partners' activities in Nigeria and the hygiene promotion project itself. Important historical and contextual information on UNICEF and Unilever's global efforts and significant contributions by other actors to promote hygiene via handwashing campaigns is also provided. This section of the report also includes some discussion of the meaning and principles of multi-stakeholder, public-private or cross-sector partnerships<sup>1</sup> in an international development context.

The rest of the report outlines the study findings namely the roles and contributions of the two main partners, key implementation challenges and mutual benefits of the partnership for both UNICEF and Unilever. The report concludes with a set of recommendations for future potential collaboration between UNICEF and Unilever in Nigeria. It is anticipated that the study's findings and recommendations will also be beneficial for both partners in their efforts to explore new partnership opportunities with other partners.

## 2.0 Study Approach and Methodology

The original terms of reference for the study emphasized the business benefits of the partnership for Unilever. Following discussions with UNICEF Nigeria, the study's focus was broadened to explore the mutual benefits for the partners as well as key partnership implementation challenges. This is consistent with partnership evaluation approaches that seek to measure the partnership's added value for the partners and to review the effectiveness of the partnership's management processes in addition to assessing the impact of project activities.

The study was re-designed to review the UNICEF-Unilever Nigeria partnership in the implementation of the Hygiene Promotion in Primary Schools project as follows:

- Benefits for Unilever Nigeria
- Benefits for UNICEF Nigeria
- Other lessons learned by the partners particularly related to project planning and implementation

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<sup>1</sup> These terms are often used inter-changeably to describe new forms of partnerships between organizations with different mandates or from a range of organizational sectors. A UN definition of these types of partnership is provided in section 4.0.

It was also anticipated that the study's findings would strengthen UNICEF Nigeria's efforts to develop partnerships with the private sector by providing evidence for the Nigerian private sector and UNICEF Nigeria of the mutual benefits of such partnerships. It was therefore subsequently agreed that the study should include some analysis of related global partnerships for handwashing involving UNICEF and Unilever. The revised terms of reference for the study are provided in Annex A.

Consequently the study focused on the dynamics of the relationship between UNICEF and Unilever as partners rather than the project's impact on beneficiaries. UNICEF and its development partners recognize the need to monitor project activities and performance, and to evaluate outcomes. Therefore UNICEF supported Federal Ministry of Environment, Housing and Urban Development to evaluate the impact of the Hygiene Promotion project itself and whether its objectives were achieved. The evaluation was conducted in collaboration with Centre for African Settlement Studies and Development (CASSAD). The final evaluation report for this work was not available during the course of the study on the UNICEF-Unilever Partnership.

Fieldwork for the study on the UNICEF-Unilever Partnership was undertaken in Nigeria over a four-week period from 29 September through to 25 October 2008. The bulk of the fieldwork was undertaken in Abuja and Lagos with one project site visit to Idimu Primary School, Alimosho, Lagos State. Desk study of documentation was undertaken in the UK both prior to and following the fieldwork. Field work also involved visit to the corporate headquarters of Unilever Nigeria.

A general partnership evaluation framework was developed based on the work of the UK-based International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF)<sup>1</sup>. A copy of the overall study framework is provided in Annex B.

Face-to-face interviews and informal discussions were conducted with 4 UNICEF Nigeria WASH programme staff and consultants, 2 UNICEF private sector fundraising staff, 2 Unilever staff, 2 representatives of the Centre for African Settlement Studies and Development (CASSAD) and 1 representative of SIAO (a Nigerian consultancy firm that provides financial advisory services and business assurance). Three of those interviewed (2 from UNICEF, 1 from Unilever) who had more in-depth knowledge of the partnership were also asked to provide written responses to selected questions based on the overall study framework. Additional telephone interviews were conducted with 2 Unilever global staff/consultants, one in the UK and the other in India. A list of all persons consulted during the course of the study is provided in Annex C.

The study methodology also encompassed presentations of preliminary findings to officials from UNICEF and Unilever in Abuja and Lagos respectively. A draft of the study report was subsequently reviewed by UNICEF Nigeria and UNICEF New York. Feedback from the two presentations and on the draft has been incorporated into this final report.

## 3.0 Background on the Partners, Partnership and Project

UN-business collaboration offers considerable promise as a means of contributing to the realization of development targets such as the MDGs. At the same time, the United Nations, its Member States and wider stakeholders recognize that partnerships with business bring considerable risks. The General Assembly has therefore affirmed that such cooperation “shall serve the purposes and principles embodied in the [UN] Charter” and “shall be undertaken in a manner that maintains the integrity, impartiality and independence of the United Nations.”<sup>2</sup> Furthermore the UN’s business partners are expected “to take into account not only the economic and financial, but also the developmental, social, human rights, gender and environmental implications of their undertakings.”<sup>3</sup>

Recent research<sup>4</sup> reveals a growing range of different forms of UN-business collaboration in the following areas:

- **Policy dialogue:** encompassing both formal and informal engagement in intergovernmental processes including the development of norms and standards
- **Global advocacy:** organizing joint campaigns to raise public awareness about the UN and its goals, targets and programmes
- **Resource mobilization:** sharing and coordinating resources for development projects and humanitarian assistance including technical advice, funding, employee volunteering and in-kind support
- **Information and learning:** facilitating the exchange and sharing of knowledge, research and collaborative learning
- **Operational delivery:** cooperating on the design and implementation of on-the-ground projects
- **Investment and market mechanisms:** securing private investment for development (e.g., job creation, provision of services, infrastructure) and supporting the expansion of sustainable markets for socio-economic empowerment.

This summary of recent trends demonstrates that the UN system is increasingly leveraging the knowledge, expertise and other resources of the private sector to support the achievement of UN goals and targets.

The rest of this section provides specific background information on the emergence of a new partnership between UNICEF and Unilever in Nigeria including important historical background on the two partner organizations.

### 3.1 UNICEF Nigeria

UNICEF’s history in Nigeria dates back to 1953 when the first basic agreement was signed to establish UNICEF’s presence in Nigeria and subsequently an office was opened in Lagos. UNICEF’s efforts in its first 30 years in Nigeria focused on mass campaigns against endemic



disease (1950s), preventive aspects of public health and humanitarian assistance (1960s) and planning for children's education and health (1970s).<sup>5</sup>

In 1982, UNICEF started Water and Sanitation activities in Nigeria initially in some of the poorest districts of Imo State. This was an integrated primary health care, water supply and sanitation (WATSAN) pilot project that was based on the drilling of wells, installation of handpumps and training of village-based workers. One of the key features of the project was a requirement that half of the households in each targeted village have household latrines built before the handpumps would be installed.<sup>6</sup>

By the early 1990s UNICEF's working relations with the Nigerian Government on water and sanitation shifted from the Ministry of Health to the Federal Ministry of Water Resources and Rural Development. The main focus of the first half of the decade included capacity building/training, national programme development, improving the national database, hand pump manufacturing and setting minimum quality standards. During this period, progress was achieved in developing capacity and responsibility at village and state levels despite ongoing constraints in the Nigerian economic, political and policy contexts. A key lesson learned from the 1991-1996 Programme of Cooperation between UNICEF and the Federal Government of Nigeria was that UNICEF should be more of an enabler rather than an implementer.<sup>7</sup>

UNICEF's recent and current support for hygiene promotion in primary schools is a major component of the Federal Government of Nigeria/UNICEF Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) programme. The hygiene promotion project aimed to improve the learning environment and to inculcate hygiene practices in pupils.

The 2002-2008 Programme of Cooperation between UNICEF and the Federal Government is present in all 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). All the programmes are represented in at least three Local Government Areas (LGAs) in every state. The five main programmes are guided by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs):

- Survival and Early Child Care
- Basic Education
- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
- Protection and Participation
- Planning and Communication

UNICEF has long-term relationship with Federal Government and all 36 state governments by building their capacity and supporting institutional strengthening for sustained service delivery. UNICEF therefore does not directly implement projects but works with Government entities that are in turn responsible for project delivery at all levels.

In addition to UNICEF Nigeria's formal cooperation with Government partners, the organization collaborates with other Nigerian and international organizations including NGOs, community-based organizations (CBOs) and private sector companies.

UNICEF Nigeria's Private Sector Fundraising and Partnerships Unit has had interaction with over 50 leading Nigerian businesses between 2006 and 2008. UNICEF Nigeria's top five current private sector partners, areas of collaboration and timelines of the relationship are outlined below:

- Unilever Nigeria Plc (WASH: 2005-2008)
- DHL Nigeria Limited (Education: 1998-2005; Immunization: 2007 – date)
- Dangote Foundation (Immunization: 2007 – date)
- Zenith Bank Plc (General: 2008-2010)
- MTN Nigeria Foundation (Education: 2005 – date)<sup>8</sup>

The objective of UNICEF Nigeria’s fundraising and private sector partnerships’ work is to increase income from individuals, corporate and civil society organizations through donations, corporate alliances and UNICEF product sales. UNICEF Nigeria also seeks to leverage resources for children from the private sector where possible, and is currently developing a new business leaders initiative on children. It is anticipated that this will create a platform through which UNICEF can engage Nigerian business leaders as advocates for children’s rights within their spheres of influence with governments, business partners and other stakeholders. Closer collaboration with the Nigerian private sector also has the potential to provide access to expertise to compliment and strengthen the efforts of UNICEF and Government human resources to implement more effectively. This approach is also consistent with global trends towards more strategic approaches to corporate social responsibility (CSR) where UN-business relations based on ad hoc philanthropic donations are being replaced by more targeted corporate social investments that help to strengthen stakeholder relations and build longer-term business value.

### 3.2 Unilever Nigeria

Unilever Nigeria Plc, was incorporated as Lever Brothers (West Africa) Ltd on 11 April, 1923, but the company’s origins lie in the trading interests of William Hesketh Lever in Nigeria dating back to the late 19th century. Today Unilever Nigeria is a leading business in the manufacturing and marketing of fast moving consumer products in the food, home and personal care categories, having its headquarters at Lagos, Nigeria. Quoted on the Nigerian Stock Exchange since 1973, the company currently has 49% of Nigerians with equity holdings. Unilever’s home and personal care products include hand and body soap, other skin care products, laundry detergent, toothpaste and deodorants.

Unilever Nigeria has a well-established approach to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) that “is focused on helping the communities in [its] environment get the best out of life especially with regards to health, nutrition, hygiene and personal care.”<sup>9</sup> The company’s CSR strategy is implemented in Nigeria under a common umbrella known as Community Assistance Programme (CAP) that covers the following five main areas:

- Water/Hygiene
- Education
- Health
- Donations/Scholarships
- Brand initiatives

Unilever Nigeria’s CSR approach is to partner with reputable international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), government ministries and agencies, and others

with proven technical expertise and infrastructural capacity. The company's main CAP/CSR partners include the following identified on the company's website:

- UNICEF
- Sight Savers International (SSI)
- WaterAid
- Liverpool Associates in Tropical Health
- Positive Action for Treatment Access
- National Action Committee on AIDS
- Nigerian Business Coalition Against AIDS
- Nigerian Dental Association
- National Association of Nigerian Dental Students
- National Association of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives
- Ministries of Health and Education (Federal and States)
- Education & Health Management Boards across the country
- Federal, State and Local governments

In addition to the company's link with UNICEF on hygiene promotion, Unilever Nigeria has partnered with the international NGO WaterAid in recent years on water and sanitation initiatives to supply potable water to various communities in Abia, Bauchi, Ogun and Plateau states, and to provide latrines for selected communities in Bauchi and Plateau states.

Unilever Nigeria also has various brand-related CSR initiatives that are executed closely with the company's brands "to ensure maximum impact, as well as brand/company visibility."<sup>10</sup> Two leading examples include: the Nutrition and Dental Health Care Campaign a collaboration with the Nutrition Society of Nigeria and the National Association of Nigerian Dental Students linked to the company's Close up toothpaste; and the Pears Hospital Campaign implemented with partnership with the National Association of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives. Unilever's Pears brand encompasses a range of baby care products such as soaps, creams, lotions, powders, and oils.

### 3.3 UNICEF-Unilever Partnership in Nigeria

As part of efforts to scale up the Hygiene Promotion project, UNICEF collaborated with Unilever Nigeria Plc between 2005 and 2008 to provide support to selected primary schools in Nigeria. The essence of the UNICEF-Unilever collaboration has been the shared vision and aims of both partners. The project's 'Hand Washing in Schools' campaign targeted schools located in all the 36 States and FCT, 222 focus communities and 111 focal Local Government Areas (2 schools per LGA; 6 schools per state).

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UNICEF and Unilever Nigeria in support of the project was signed in August 2005 and the project was launched in October 2005 with the official presentation of cheque for the first phase of the project. Although the initial Unilever contribution was received in last quarter of the year, the project was not part of UNICEF's Annual Work Plan for 2005 hence the need for adjustment to the plan. The last quarter is normally reserved for reviewing the plans with counterparts, reporting and closure of activities. Personnel changes within the UNICEF WASH team caused some additional delays and formal implementation of the project did not begin until 1 March 2006. The total

project contribution from Unilever that was disbursed over three years was N78, 625, 470 (US\$666,317). In addition to this financial commitment, Unilever also donated 5,250 bars of soap for project launches at federal and state levels and assisted UNICEF in developing campaign messages. UNICEF was responsible for overall project design and implementation.

Almost a year earlier in December 2004, the Executive Director of UNICEF and the Chairman of Unilever plc signed a global MoU to “collaborate, in a non-exclusive relationship, on projects of mutual interest to make a measurable difference to United Nations Millennium Development Goals, in particular MDG4” – to reduce by two-thirds the mortality rate among children under five by 2015. With regards to hygiene, the global MoU notes that “UNICEF and Unilever are interested in exploring ways to promote health through hygienic behaviour and related product technology and product availability for children of all ages (and by extension their families) around the world, giving priority to children of low income families.”<sup>11</sup> Two UNICEF-Unilever global partnership teams were established in Hygiene and Nutrition to make use of the complimentary skills and resources of both organizations. Pilot projects in Uganda (handwashing) and India (water treatment) respectively have already been launched.

The UNICEF-Unilever Nigeria partnership has not been directly linked with the global partnership initiative to date. Further information on the UNICEF-Unilever global partnership is provided in section 4.0 below.

The specific objectives of the UNICEF-Unilever Hygiene Promotion in Primary Schools in Nigeria project are outlined below:

- Hygiene practices improved in 222 primary schools in 111 LGAs in 36 states and FCT through the promotion of hand washing amongst primary school pupils.
- Awareness on hygiene practices increased amongst pupils in 222 primary schools and behaviour change process facilitated in their communities.
- Capacity of school pupils in 222 schools to become change agents improved for hygiene and sanitation in and out of school environment.
- Capacity of 222 Communities and 111 LGAs strengthened to self-monitor and evaluate hygiene practices.

The project was planned to have been completed by December 2007 but was extended until June 2008 due to late start and some challenges encountered during the course of project implementation such as incessant industrial action embarked upon by school teachers and frequent change of State and LGA level policy makers.

Reports from the field have shown some positive impact on school enrolment and attendance in the selected schools among many other benefits. The project reported that over 3 million people were reached/sensitized with hygiene knowledge and handwashing messages for personal hygiene. The population reached included senior politicians, the First Lady of Nigeria, State first ladies and Governors with the majority being school students, parent teacher associations, school environmental health club members and community members.

## 4.0 Global Partnerships for Handwashing

Over the past two decades, there has been growing recognition within the international community of the need for greater multi-stakeholder collaboration to tackle persistent global challenges. For example, the United Nations system and a wide range of actors have been developing and implementing new forms of partnership to achieve the MDGs, to meet growing humanitarian crises and to strengthen peace and security worldwide. Building on well-established forms of UN-Government collaboration, the UN system is providing greater opportunities to the private sector, NGOs and civil society in general to enable them to contribute to the realization of UN goals and programmes.

The UN General Assembly has defined multi-stakeholder partnerships as “voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both public and non-public, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and, as mutually agreed, to share risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits.”<sup>12</sup> Key features that help to differentiate multi-stakeholder partnerships from other forms of cooperation between the UN system and non-state actors is that most partnerships usually encompass the following seven principles:

- Common purpose
- Equity
- Complementarity
- Mutual benefit
- Transparency
- Mutual respect
- Accountability and result-oriented approach<sup>13</sup>

An important characteristic of such partnerships is that they seek to serve broader public goals as well as meeting the individual objectives of participating organizations. The partners bring complementary resources and competencies to ensure that the partnership goals are achieved. Individual partner needs must also be met if they are to continue to participate in and contribute to the partnership. Partnership success ultimately depends on ensuring mutual benefit is realized by the partners through the achievement of both individual organizational and shared partnership aims.

Formal global collaboration between various diverse partners to promote handwashing with soap first began to emerge in April 2000 when the World Bank and the Water and Sanitation Program (WSP), a multi-donor partnership based at the World Bank, organized an international forum on ‘Investing in Sanitation in Developing Countries’ The World Bank contracted the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine to take the lead on hygiene and sanitation promotion at the Forum. Other conference presenters included UNICEF, USAID, the International Reference Center (IRC), and various NGOs and government representatives. Case studies from Central America and Indonesia illustrated how multi-stakeholder collaboration had increased the use of soap and availability of sanitation facilities in the two countries.

One of the forum’s main conclusions was that development assistance partners should explore new forms of collaboration to boost sanitation and handwashing in poor communities of developing countries. Following the Forum, a core team of partners agreed to work

together on a new global initiative (see 4.1 below) to expand multi-stakeholder partnerships as a means of accelerating improved hygiene and sanitation in developing countries.

#### 4.1 Key Actors and Catalysts<sup>14</sup>

The achievement by 2015 of MDG 4 and the water and sanitation targets of MDG 7<sup>2</sup> will require enhanced partnership between many social actors, including governments, inter-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and businesses. UNICEF, Unilever and various other international and national actors recognize that each partner has particular competencies and skills to contribute to meeting these goals successfully. Global and national partnerships for handwashing with soap have emerged within this context.

One of the catalysts for multi-stakeholder partnerships for handwashing with soap was the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) and the efforts of Dr. Val Curtis, who is trained in engineering, epidemiology and anthropology. Dr Curtis is currently Director of the LSHTM Hygiene Centre, a multidisciplinary group dedicated to improving hygiene, sanitation and water in households and schools through enhancing knowledge. Both LSHTM and Dr. Curtis share expertise and interest in measuring and developing greater understanding of the effectiveness of hygiene promotion and related behaviour change motivation.

In the late 1990s, Dr Curtis was working in Burkina Faso where she coordinated a major study of diarrhoeal disease and a trial of the effectiveness of hygiene promotion. During her time in Burkina Faso, Dr Curtis contacted three multinational consumer goods companies – Colgate-Palmolive, Procter & Gamble and Unilever – and asked them for advice on to how to promote handwashing with soap as a habitual practice for preventing and reducing the incidence of gastro-intestinal disorders which are largely a result of poor handwashing habits.

The three companies had considerable expertise in creating automatic behaviors or habits among consumers through the successful marketing and advertising of their diverse product ranges. The key to the companies' success was to encourage their customers to use their products "in response to a carefully designed set of daily cues."<sup>15</sup> For example, a combination of both effective advertising and dental health campaigns during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century means that many people brush their teeth on a daily basis with popular brands of toothpaste.

Dr Curtis explains why she saw the need to find new ways of tackling "fundamental public health problems, like hand washing with soap, that remain killers only because we can't figure out how to change people's habits... We wanted to learn from private industry how to create new behaviors that happen automatically."

Dr Curtis's consultations with Colgate-Palmolive, Procter & Gamble and Unilever and her subsequent contribution to the international forum on 'Investing in Sanitation in Developing Countries' were key catalysts that gave birth in January 2001 to 'Health in Our Hands: The Global Public-Private Partnership for Handwashing with Soap', a global initiative aimed at promoting the use of handwashing with soap in developing countries. The core partners in this initiative include:

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<sup>2</sup> **MDG 7:** Ensure environmental sustainability. **Target 3:** Halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

- Water and Sanitation Program
- World Bank / Bank-Netherlands Water Partnership
- World Bank Water Anchor
- London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
- Academy for Educational Development
- USAID/Hygiene Improvement Project
- UNICEF
- Colgate-Palmolive
- Unilever
- Procter & Gamble
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

To date country-level partnerships have been established in Ghana, Nepal, Peru, Senegal and more recently in Uganda (see 4.2 below). At the global level, partnership advocacy events are organized to promote handwashing.

The objectives of The Global Public-Private Partnership for Handwashing with Soap are:

- To reduce the incidence of diarrhoeal diseases in poor communities through Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) promoting handwashing with soap.
- To implement large-scale handwashing interventions and use lessons to promote the approach at global level.

The initial target for Ghana was to double the hand-washing rate after using the toilet.

The key guiding principles and country-level guidelines for the global partnership are outlined in Annex D.

Programmes are open to all interested parties, both public and private, and target those most at risk (mothers, children, the poor) across the whole population. Detailed consumer studies provide data to ensure that interventions reach out to target audiences through appropriate mass media and direct consumer contact. Government channels of communication are also used. Detailed programme monitoring and evaluation provides additional information and knowledge to guide follow-up interventions.

## 4.2 Unilever, Lifebuoy and UNICEF

In addition to Unilever's support for handwashing in Nigeria and at the global level as noted above, the company has over the years developed its own expertise in promoting hygiene via the marketing, advertising and sales of its Lifebuoy brand of soap in many parts of the world. Unilever's Lifebuoy brand vision is "to make 5 billion people in Asia, Africa and elsewhere feel safe and secure by meeting all their hygiene needs."<sup>16</sup>

The Lifebuoy brand is one of Unilever's oldest brands, launched in the UK in 1894 as Lifebuoy Royal Disinfectant Soap and later made available across the world. Unilever describes Lifebuoy as "the first affordable soap, supporting people in their quest for better personal hygiene."<sup>17</sup> Today Lifebuoy is the market leader in every Asian market where it is

sold. Unilever promotes Lifebuoy-branded hygiene programmes in Asian countries such as India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Vietnam.

Unilever's Lifebuoy brand team collaborates with various organizations to promote hygiene and health, to change consumer behaviour through handwashing partnerships at the country, regional and global levels.

Building on the original global MoU signed in 2004, Unilever's Lifebuoy team and UNICEF's global hygiene team developed a Charter document in 2007 that highlighted the partners efforts "to make a contribution to MDG4 by promoting at scale the essential link between handwashing with soap and the health of Under 5's by creating engaging ways for school children to:

- Influence behaviour change among mothers/caregivers and siblings
- Wash their own hands with soap at critical times"<sup>18</sup>

The UNICEF-Unilever 2007 Charter and both organizations' involvement in The Global PPP on Handwashing with Soap has given birth to a new partnership in Uganda called 'Project Champion', which represents one of the key initiatives of the UNICEF-Unilever global MoU to date. Project Champion represents a very different form of partnership than the Nigeria partnership, which preceded Project Champion. Rather than being primarily based upon financial support as was the case in Nigeria, Unilever is working in Uganda with UNICEF, the Discovery Channel, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and local partners to assemble a set of complementary skills and resources to bring the message of hygiene to vulnerable Ugandan children and to help reduce diarrhoeal disease in the country.

Another significant development that will influence UNICEF's ongoing partnerships with Unilever Lifebuoy is a draft set of principles of engagement that will provide a framework for the company's future partnering work on handwashing worldwide. The draft principles suggest that the company is likely to reduce its support for philanthropy and to emphasize commercially sustainable activities. Furthermore the principles indicate that Unilever Lifebuoy will focus on the creation of capabilities and transfer of skills in preference to providing just funding.

Lifebuoy's new principles are consistent with Unilever's global CSR strategy that links long-term business growth and success to the company's efforts to find more sustainable ways of doing business – what Unilever describes as "doing well by doing good." The company's global CSR strategy seeks to:

- Enhance the health and well-being of consumers through its products and brands
- Address the sustainability challenges related to climate change, water, packaging and sourcing of agricultural raw materials
- Create wealth in the communities where it operates and bring benefits to its stakeholders.<sup>19</sup>

Unilever's global CSR strategy is being implemented around the world to ensure consistency in the company's overall approach. For example, Unilever Nigeria has recently aligned its CSR programme with the Central Africa Regional CSR Strategy that comprises four pillars:

- Nutrition & health



- HIV/AIDS
- Hygiene
- Sustainable Development

Unilever companies in the region are also expected to ensure alignment with existing Unilever CSR regional and global commitments (e.g., the global partnership with UNICEF) with only a small budget allocated for local initiatives. Unilever companies in Africa and elsewhere will be expected to integrate sustainability more explicitly into their mission and make water a corporate priority. Overall Unilever will continue to link its brands to its work on CSR where possible and when relevant.

## 5.0 Partner Incentives, Roles and Contributions

Multi-stakeholder or cross-sector partnerships bring together the competencies and resources of diverse development actors each with their own incentives for partnering. As noted earlier, partnerships link organizations that share a common purpose but to ensure sustainability in partnerships the individual partner needs must also be met.

In the case of the UNICEF-Unilever Partnership for Hygiene Promotion in Primary Schools in Nigeria, the primary focus was on reaching greater number of Nigerian school children with hygiene promotion messages. Any direct or indirect commercial benefits for Unilever in Nigeria arising from the partnership were considered from the outset to be of secondary importance.

In this section of the report, key findings are highlighted related to the partners' incentives and roles in the UNICEF-Unilever Partnership.<sup>3</sup> This section of the report also offers a useful reference point when the benefits for the two partners are reviewed later in section 7.

### 5.1 Partner Incentives

UNICEF Nigeria had a number of drivers and incentives for partnering with Unilever Nigeria on the Hygiene Promotion project:

- **Filling a funding gap:** UNICEF Nigeria relies on external funds to develop and implement its Programme of Cooperation with Federal Government and other partners in the country. As part of the organization's efforts to diversify its funding sources, UNICEF Nigeria partnered with Unilever to help bring new financial resources to the WASH programme. This new and additional funding source was also seen as means of enabling UNICEF to expand WASH outreach to a greater number of schools in the country.

<sup>3</sup> Although not directly involved in the UNICEF-Unilever Partnership itself, UNICEF Field Offices and State Rural Water Sanitation Agencies were actively involved in the State, LGA and School launches of handwashing campaigns. They were primarily responsible for organizing the campaigns and UNICEF's WASH Section mainly provided technical support through consultants. UNICEF's Communication/Media and External Relations Units were also involved in the campaigns. Press releases for launches were facilitated by the Media Unit.

- **Leveraging private sector resources to achieve better results for Nigerian children:** UNICEF considered Unilever as having the potential to bring new ideas and methods to UNICEF's work on hygiene promotion in primary schools. By partnering with a new partner in Unilever, UNICEF anticipated that the collaboration could help build better child knowledge, attitudes and practices about handwashing.
- **Strengthening partnership relations with business:** UNICEF Nigeria's relations with private sector partners have historically been based on fundraising proposals. Given the organization's interest in leveraging a greater variety of private sector resources, the three-year Unilever partnership offered UNICEF an opportunity to develop a longer-term working relationship with an established, leading Nigerian company. The Unilever partnership also represented an advocacy opportunity to bring new private sector partners and methods to the water and sanitation sector and to help scale up interventions.

The key partnership drivers and incentives for Unilever Nigeria included:

- **Linkages to Unilever's strategic Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) focus on health & hygiene:** The partnership with UNICEF offered Unilever an opportunity to reach out to a wider number of communities (with a particular emphasis on children) with important health and hygiene promotion messages. Unilever saw the partnership as means of enabling the company to contribute to social mission by realizing improvements in hygiene and sanitation practices throughout the country by collaborating with a technically competent and strategic partner in UNICEF.
- **Improving its corporate image in Nigeria:** The company also saw its support for the partnership with UNICEF as an excellent means of enhancing the company's reputation as a responsible Nigerian corporate citizen with key stakeholders – local communities, consumers, employees, government, NGOs and the UN system.
- **Enhancing the health and well-being of consumers through association with Unilever products and brands:** The partnership also had the potential to bring some business benefits to Unilever as greater numbers of children and their families targeted by the project become more aware of the need to wash their hands with soap after using the toilet. When Unilever Nigeria decided not to launch the Lifebuoy brand of soap to coincide with the company's partnership with UNICEF on the hygiene promotion project, the opportunity to pursue this objective was not realized. This issue is elaborated in sections 5.2 and 6.2 below.

Both UNICEF and Unilever appear to have been largely transparent about their respective motives and incentives for their decisions to enter into the partnership. Each partner respected and acknowledged the other's individual organizational priorities as part of the partnership development process. Unilever's changing circumstances related to the proposed Lifebuoy product launch perhaps should have been more openly discussed at the initial stages of the project. This would have helped to clarify Unilever's motivations and incentives for its ongoing commitment to the partnership.

## 5.2 Partner Roles and Contributions

The essence of partnerships is that they bring together two or more organizations with complementary competencies and resources all of which are valued equitably. Partners typically come together because each partner lacks something that the other partner can provide. A one-way transfer of resources from one organization to another is not consistent with a partnership approach.

Although not signatories to the UNICEF-Unilever Partnership MoU, the State and Local governments were actively involved in the implementation of the project. While UNICEF and Unilever provided technical and financial support, the State and local governments were actually involved in physical service delivery. The State and Local governments also contributed some funding in terms of staff salaries and allowances to support the project.

The specific roles and contributions of UNICEF and Unilever in the Partnership for Hygiene Promotion are outlined below.

UNICEF Nigeria brought more than 50 years of development cooperation experience in the country and the following additional competencies and contributions to the partnership with Unilever:

- **Project Coordination:** Overall project management, technical oversight & supervision of all project activities. UNICEF was an attractive partner for Unilever given its proven track record in water, sanitation and hygiene in Nigeria.
- **Resource Mobilization:** UNICEF's capacity to mobilize and allocate financial and human resources required for the project.
- **Partnership Facilitation:** UNICEF had demonstrated experience in facilitating implementation through other partners such as Local and State Governments.
- **Capacity Building:** UNICEF brought extensive experience of engaging and developing capacity of key local actors (e.g., LGAs, communities, teachers, Parent Teacher Associations, School Based Management Committees & School Environmental Health Clubs).
- **Public Information and Communications:** UNICEF offered extensive experience in the development of Information, Educational, and Communication (IEC) messages and production of materials.
- **Project Funding:** UNICEF contributed more than US\$ 200,000 as direct cash and supplies inputs to the partnership. Most of such input was in the form of hardware parts in the targeted schools

Unilever Nigeria brought its proven track record of partnerships with non-profit organizations and the following additional competencies and contributions to the partnership with UNICEF:

- **Project funding:** Unilever Nigeria allocated a substantial portion of its annual Community Assistance Programme (CAP) budget for a period of three years. The company's financial contribution of US\$ \$666,317 represented almost **25%** of Unilever's CAP budget during the 2005-07 period.<sup>20</sup>
- **In-kind contributions:** Unilever Nigeria donated 5,250 bars of Lux & Pears branded soap for national and state project launches across the country. When Unilever decided not to launch Lifebuoy soap in Nigeria to coincide with the hygiene project implementation, the company's soap contributions were allocated only to launch events. Unilever was therefore unable to offer its brand marketing expertise as the company did not want to link well-established brand messages – Lux (beauty and skin care) and Pears (baby care) – with the hygiene and handwashing promotion messages of the UNICEF partnership project. This issue is explored in further detail in section 6.2 below.
- **Human resources:** Unilever Corporate Relations staff and company distributors around the country contributed their time and travel costs for project-related activities, namely:
  - Attendance at national and/or state project launches
  - Participation by the Unilever Corporate Relations Manager in project monitoring through regular site visits
  - Provision of input by Unilever into IEC materials design

The above illustrates how each partner brought its particular capabilities and resources to the partnership. While UNICEF assumed primary responsibility for project design and coordination, Unilever made contributions to the project above and beyond the funding. Nonetheless Unilever's decision not to launch Lifebuoy to coincide with the hygiene promotion project was a missed opportunity to bring considerable brand marketing and promotion expertise to the project.

## 6.0 Partnership and Project Implementation Issues

Multi-stakeholder partnerships face numerous implementation challenges given that they usually bring together actors with very different organizational mandates and cultures. The UNICEF-Unilever Partnership reveals three main implementation challenges related to both partnership dynamics and project management:

- Differences in organizational cultures and capacities
- Strategic and practical considerations
- Internal and external communications

## 6.1 Organizational Cultures and Capacities

From the outset the partnership faced the challenge of getting the partnership agreed and launched.

As a business that produces fast-moving consumer goods, Unilever Nigeria has an organizational culture that values promptness in project delivery. In contrast UNICEF Nigeria facilitates long-term development cooperation and invests in Government and other partners for sustainable outcomes; and is a part of the UN system that has rules and procedures for project approvals, staff recruitment and budget allocations, which may be perceived as time-consuming and overly bureaucratic by outsiders.

It is not surprising that misunderstandings would emerge between two partners with very different missions and ways of operating, particularly in the early stages of the relationship. The following examples represent some of the key obstacles faced by both before and after the partnership was formally agreed:

- Defining and managing expectations on both sides about the timing of both project start-up and ongoing implementation
- Unilever's limited knowledge of UNICEF approval procedures for both the MoU and the transfer of funds from Unilever
- Additional delays due to UNICEF WASH personnel changes following the signing of the MoU and before the formal project launch.
- The MoU was signed in August 2005 and in October Unilever's official presented the initial cheque to UNICEF for the first phase of the project, which was the last quarter of UNICEF's Annual Work Plan. The project, however, was not formally started until almost the second quarter of 2006.

In addition to the organizational culture and capacity-related implementation challenges identified above, both partners found themselves having to work with some state government partners who were not always fully engaged in the project. Although such government partners were not formally part of the UNICEF-Unilever bilateral partnership, their lack of partnering experience with private sector actors impacted on partnership dynamics. This perception could also be attributed to Unilever's limited experience of working directly with many different state and local government partners on such a large-scale hygiene promotion project. Again organizational culture differences between the private and public sector may have contributed to the apparent disconnect between Unilever and some state government partners.

## 6.2 Strategic and Practical Issues

One of the most significant strategic challenges that faced the partnership was also an important practical issue for the project. The common strategic and practical issue revolved around the type and quantities of soap donated to the project by Unilever.

One of the elements of the project implementation plan outlined in Annex One of the UNICEF-Unilever MoU was that “a year’s supply of soap will be provided to each school” participating in the project. This element appears to have been dropped from the implementation plan when Unilever decided for business reasons not to proceed with its planned launch of Lifebuoy soap in the Nigerian market in 2006. This decision contributed to the following strategic and practical challenges:

- **Lack of clarity about the quantities and frequency of soap donations:** Participating schools and other local partners expected Unilever to donate a year’s supply of soap to each school but in reality the 5,250 bars of Lux and Pears soap were only allocated to federal and state project launches. This appears to have caused confusion among some partners and other stakeholders (including consumers) about Unilever’s contributions to the project. There is however no consumer research available to suggest this.
- **Lack of a hygiene campaign soap brand:** Lux became the unofficial campaign soap even though Pears was also donated for some state launches. Although Lux featured prominently in project launches, Unilever did not want its Lux brand to be linked to hygiene promotion in Nigeria. Lux is established in the Nigerian market as a skin care beauty soap targeted mainly at women consumers. Unilever promotes Lux in Nigeria as a beauty and glamour product.

The lack of an official hygiene campaign soap brand meant that Unilever missed a strategic opportunity to maximize commercial benefits of a new soap launch in Nigeria. UNICEF, Unilever and other partners also missed an opportunity to reach greater scale with both the partnership and the handwashing project and potentially achieve better, more sustainable outcomes. If Unilever had launched Lifebuoy in 2006 to coincide with project implementation, there would have been considerable and active involvement from Unilever Nigeria’s brand building, marketing and sales promotion personnel. From a practical point of view larger quantities of soap would have also been donated to schools and such donations could have been leveraged for long-term health and commercial benefits for all of the partners involved.

Ultimately both the partnership and project would also have potentially benefited from Unilever Lifebuoy’s global support team and its growing network of partnerships around the world including The Global PPP on Handwashing with Soap. This is not to downplay the significant contributions by Unilever to the Hygiene Promotion in Primary Schools Project in Nigeria, but rather to recognize the potential value-added from such additional resources.

## 6.3 Communications

Most effective partnerships (and partners) recognize the importance of transparent and regular communications between the partners and effective and coordinated external communications. Many of the implementation challenges identified above can be related to communications.

In this section, a number of internal and external communications issues are identified as being particularly significant in the UNICEF-Unilever Partnership, some of which have been previously noted.

- **Frequency of communication between partners in the early stages of the project was inadequate.** This contributed to a lack of clarity between the partners at the outset related to partner expectations, project timelines and UNICEF procedures. Although some of the initial disconnect between the partners may be linked to variations in organizational cultures, better and more regular communications between the partners during the project inception phase would have helped the partners to understand and manage their organizational differences more effectively. These lapses were however corrected as project implementation progressed.
- **Insufficient advance notice by UNICEF to Unilever of state project launches.** Given that State Government partners often change the dates for such events at the last minute, UNICEF was for the most part not responsible for such logistical matters. UNICEF has extensive experience of working with State Government partners and therefore has learned to adapt to such realities. On the other hand, Unilever has limited experience of working directly with State Governments and less understanding of such logistical challenges. There were also some instances when sufficient advanced notice was given but Unilever could not make it due to some other challenges. Despite Unilever's occasional absence at launches, the company's contributions were always acknowledged by governments and other stakeholders during such campaigns.
- **Communication and coordination challenges at the headquarters versus field office level.** UNICEF Field Offices work closely with State Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agencies but neither party has experience of high-level strategic engagement with the private sector such as the UNICEF-Unilever Partnership. In addition to concerns about the participation of UNICEF field offices and state agencies in the partnership, Unilever also noted differences in communication styles and attitudes within UNICEF Nigeria, for example, between WASH Section programme staff and Private Sector Fundraising and Partnerships Unit staff or between UNICEF staff and consultants. These represent important internal communications challenges for UNICEF Nigeria as it seeks to strengthen partnering capacity within the organization for more effective engagement of private sector partners. This was mainly at the initial stage of project implementation. Communication and coordination between field offices and WASH Section as well as with the Private Sector Fundraising Unit improved as project implementation progressed.

Mutual briefing sessions between partner representatives at Unilever and UNICEF offices helped improve relationships during the course of project implementation and enabled the partners to overcome some of the communications challenges highlighted above. Nonetheless major communications challenges remain, particularly within UNICEF Nigeria as the organization seeks to work more actively with private sector partners in the years ahead. For its part, Unilever Nigeria would also benefit from giving more attention to internal communications within the company about the partnership with UNICEF as means of building greater organizational buy-in and commitment to such corporate social investments.

## 7.0 Partner Benefits and Results

The importance of achieving individual partner objectives and of ensuring that the partnership produces positive results have been highlighted in various places in this report. Mutual benefit is one of the most important partnering principles as it helps to promote joint accountability for action and results. If a partner does not benefit from its involvement in a partnership, it is unlikely that the organization concerned will continue to participate and invest resources such as staff time, funding and in-kind contributions.

At the same time, the partners should not lose sight of the need to ensure that the partnership has produced tangible benefits for Nigerian children and Nigeria as a nation. This is central to UNICEF's mission and impact in Nigeria, and this is also important for Unilever's social responsibility and the sustainability of its commercial business. Some of these wider benefits of the partnership include:

- The partnership's focus on school children enhanced their knowledge of hygiene practices and built their capacity to act as change agents for sustained behavioural change in the targeted schools and communities.
- This has helped to build a critical mass of school children who are better equipped to promote hygiene practices. This in turn has provided a good foundation for improved hygiene practices in the country.
- The partnership helped to scale up hygiene promotion in school interventions in the country which in turn has offered the federal and state governments the opportunity to expand the campaign to cover all primary schools in the country.
- The partnership showcased the value of public-private-collaboration for hygiene promotion in the country, and has provided UNICEF, Government counterparts and the Nigerian private sector with a model for future partnerships on child health issues.

Notwithstanding the need to ensure that the partnership ultimately benefits Nigerian children, partnership viability is also contingent upon the partners continuing to benefit from their involvement in tangible ways. In the rest of this section of the report, the key benefits of the Hygiene Promotion Partnership for both UNICEF and Unilever are outlined.



## 7.1 Key Benefits for UNICEF Nigeria

- **Targeted scale-up on hygiene promotion:** The partnership with Unilever provided UNICEF with an opportunity for a targeted, scale-up of its programming on hygiene promotion in primary schools in Nigeria. Although UNICEF might have been able to identify other sources of funding for this purpose, Unilever's contribution was significant and timely, and also brought other benefits to UNICEF (see below).
- **Capacity development of government and community partners:** The partnership enabled UNICEF to develop government capacities and strengthen institutions in states, LGAs and communities reached.
- **Enhanced UNICEF Nigeria understanding of how to work effectively with a major business actor in project delivery:** UNICEF has considerable experience in Nigeria of mobilizing private sector financial support for its programmes and activities. By partnering with Unilever on a three-year joint project, UNICEF Nigeria programme and fundraising staff have developed new knowledge and skills that can be applied to future opportunities for UNICEF-business collaboration. UNICEF Nigeria's Private Sector Fundraising and Partnerships Unit also has greater understanding of sanitation and hygiene issues as a result of its active involvement in the UNICEF-Unilever Partnership.
- **The partnership with Unilever also offers a good role model for UNICEF Nigeria's efforts to engage other prospective Nigerian business partners:** Unilever made a presentation on its involvement in the partnership at UNICEF's private sector forum on the International Year of Sanitation in 2008. UNICEF also emphasizes Unilever's strategic approach to CSR and how targeted social investments can help build long-term business success and value. This has facilitated recent UNICEF negotiations with Procter & Gamble for a new cause-related marketing partnership.
- **Positive media coverage of partnership** although UNICEF Communications was unable to provide precise disaggregated data on the number of specific national and local media mentions of the partnership with Unilever.

## 7.2 Key Benefits for Unilever

- **Reputational gain with key stakeholders:** The partnership with UNICEF Nigeria has enabled Unilever to raise its profile with political leaders, traditional rulers, public officials, students, teachers, parents and other community members.
- **Positive media coverage of Unilever's involvement:** Unilever Nigeria has documented 15 positive mass media mentions during project launches at national and state levels. The company's role in the partnership has also received extensive television, radio and Internet coverage in the country. Local newspapers and media outlets also covered the partnership. National media coverage was facilitated by media briefings organized by Unilever Nigeria at its headquarters in Lagos.

- **Employee awareness about hygiene promotion:** Unilever helped to build employee awareness about the UNICEF partnership and hygiene promotion project via articles in company newsletters and on its website. The Unilever global website has also included information about the partnership and project.
- **Enhanced social capital:** Unilever Nigeria's involvement in the partnership has also strengthened the company's social networks and relationships with UNICEF, government officials, traditional rulers and rural communities reached by project.
- **Corporate citizenship:** The cumulative effect of all of the above has meant that Unilever's overall image as good corporate citizen in Nigeria has been reinforced through the high-profile UNICEF partnership and the company's association with the hygiene promotion cause throughout the country. Capacity development for states and communities also enabled Unilever to meet its broader corporate aim of contributing to Nigeria's sustainable development.
- **Direct commercial benefits:** Measurable financial bottom-line benefits in terms of increased profits for Unilever could not be identified. Although the brand value of Lux and Pears might have been enhanced as a result of their use at project launches, the company was unable to identify any associated direct commercial benefits. As noted earlier, Unilever decision not to launch the Lifebuoy branded-soap to coincide with the handwashing campaign was the main factor why such commercial benefits were not realized.

## 8.0 Main Conclusions and Recommendations

There are three cross-cutting themes arising from the study of the UNICEF-Unilever Partnership for Hygiene Promotion in Primary Schools in Nigeria that have most influenced the partnering process to date and that have the potential to shape the future partnership prospects for both organizations:

- Communications in a partnership context
- Selection and engagement of people and partners
- Strategic choices and decisions

Each of these themes is discussed in turn below with corresponding recommendations to guide potential ongoing collaboration between UNICEF and Unilever in Nigeria, and other potential partnerships that the two organizations might pursue independently in the future.

## 8.1 Communications in a Partnership Context

The Partnering Initiative provides a compelling argument of the need for greater attention to communications in a partnership context: “partnerships are by their nature challenging, requiring collaboration between players from diverse organizations that may have quite different priorities, values and ways of working. These challenges are typically reflected in all aspects of communication both within and outside the partnership. It is vital, therefore, to identify exactly what these challenges are and how to systematically address them so that communication becomes a part of the partnership-building process, not a cause of persistent dissent.”<sup>21</sup>

The following emerge as key lessons learned from the UNICEF-Unilever Partnership related to communications challenges:

- **Consistent and transparent communications between partners:** Successful, long-term partnerships depend upon a shared commitment to consistent, two-way communication and transparency between the partners. Although the MoU between UNICEF and Unilever included sections on ‘Reporting’ and ‘Publicity and Communications’, there was no specific mention of the frequency of partner meetings or even the need for ongoing monitoring of the actual relationship between the partners.  
> **Recommendation:** *Future partnerships should build into the early stages of negotiation a discussion about communications between the partners and include provision for this in any partnering agreements.*
- **Partnering for external communications:** Communications units within both UNICEF and Unilever provided support to the partnership albeit without active involvement in partnership meetings or any apparent collaboration between communications personnel in the two organizations. This was a missed opportunity for the partnership and would have expanded opportunities for more targeted, coordinated and strategic external communications.  
> **Recommendation:** *There should be more engagement with and coordination between communications and public relations staff in the partner organizations for more effective external communication and measurement of results (i.e., more targeted communications and more precise identification of coverage).*
- **Improved internal communications and greater institutional buy-in:** Within both UNICEF and Unilever, there were gaps in communication internally. Communication and coordination between UNICEF’s Private Sector Unit staff and WASH programme officers about the partnership improved during the course of implementation. Notwithstanding the substantial contributions of UNICEF communications officers, field staff and consultants to project launches and related activities, they had limited direct engagement with Unilever and were not actively involved in the partnership per se. For its part, Unilever’s participation in the partnership with UNICEF was largely restricted to the Corporate Relations team and did not involve employees working in human resources, communications, brand building, marketing or sales.

> **Recommendation:** *The partners should give greater attention to internal communications about the partnership within their respective organizations to mobilize valuable potential human resources for the partnership and to ensure greater institutional buy-in within each partner organization.*

## 8.2 Selection and Engagement of People and Partners

The organizations and individuals that become involved in partnerships often have had pre-existing relationships with each other yet there is value in approaching the issue of partner selection more strategically. Building on established and emerging relationships is an inevitable part of any partnership development process, however there is still value in undertaking a more systematic and rigorous partner selection process.

Careful partner selection is important because it helps to:

- Make the partnership relevant
- Enable effective working relationships
- Minimize risks
- Ensure that the partnership's activities are sustainable<sup>22</sup>

The following emerge as key lessons learned from the UNICEF-Unilever Partnership related to the selection and engagement of people and partners:

- **Getting the right people engaged:** Highly competent and committed staff represented Unilever and UNICEF in the partnership, and government and community participants in the project. Unilever's Corporate Relations Manager and UNICEF's WASH Specialist (Project Officer) were the focal points for each of the partners. UNICEF also benefited from the active engagement of its Private Sector Unit. However, there were many other people in both organizations who could have made valuable contributions to the partnership but who were not included in the partnering process. The partnership would have benefited from additional human resources from both partners.
  - > **Recommendation:** *Unilever communications staff, branding/marketing managers and company distributors should be more actively engaged in future partnerships where their particular skills and competencies would be beneficial.*
  - > **Recommendation:** *UNICEF should make more strategic use of its communications officers and field staff in future partnerships. UNICEF should also recruit more passionate and committed third party field consultants for its future partnering activities with the private sector.*
- **Recruiting and engaging other partners and important stakeholders:** As lead partners for the hygiene promotion project, UNICEF and Unilever were the guardians of the partnership itself. Various government and community actors were involved in project implementation and made valuable contributions towards the achievement of the overall aims of the partnership. The MoU was an agreement between UNICEF and Unilever, however UNICEF was for the most part the public face of the partnership. The partnership would have benefited from greater clarity about the Unilever's role in the partnership particularly with key project partners (State and

Local Governments) and stakeholders (traditional leaders and community organizations). A potential role for small businesses involved in local soap production was not explored despite evidence from other countries of their participation as partners in handwashing campaign steering committees individually and through industry associations and of their demonstrated flexibility to move rapidly.

Nonetheless, evidence from elsewhere suggests that small-scale local soap producers may need extra assistance to become active partners.<sup>23</sup>

> **Recommendation:** *Future partnerships should include early-stage negotiation and coordination with key local partners and stakeholders to clarify the different roles, responsibilities and contributions of the various actors involved. Future handwashing partnerships and projects should also include consideration of a potential role for Unilever's competitors involved in soap manufacturing as well as small-scale soap producers. These small-scale producers may require tailored support and capacity building to enable them to participate more equitably as active partners.*

A systematic process of selecting partners requires considerable time investment. The development of strategic partnerships is dependent on such a process as it helps to build commitment to the principle of mutual benefit and enables shared ownership by all the partners of both the process and the results. Undertaking a rigorous and open partner selection process ultimately helps to build trust and sustainability.

According to Ros Tennyson of the International Business Leaders Forum “choosing partners may be a slow process, but will be time well-spent if the subsequent partnership-based activities are enduring and robust.”<sup>24</sup>

### 8.3 Strategic Choices and Decisions

Partnerships for development offer considerable promise as a means of contributing to the realization of internationally agreed targets such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to the implementation of national development planning frameworks like the current Country Programme of Cooperation between the Federal Government of Nigeria and UNICEF.

The UNICEF-Unilever Partnership for Hygiene Promotion in Primary Schools in Nigeria has over the past three years managed to make a small but significant contribution to effort to meet the MDG4 target of reducing by two-thirds the mortality rate among Nigerian children under five by 2015.

The ultimate success of the UNICEF-Unilever Partnership has been and will continue to be influenced by various contextual factors beyond the control of the partners. Nigeria is a large, diverse and complex country in which to design and implement a nation-wide development project. The challenges of working with state and local authorities with different capacities and competencies and levels of engagement have already been noted. The need to find ways of including such partners and other stakeholders appropriately in the partnering process has also been highlighted above.

This final section of the report focuses on two important lessons learned from the UNICEF-Unilever Partnership related to key strategic choices and decisions that influenced the process and outcomes:

- **Ensuring that the business case for partnership is clearly defined and articulated:** Unilever's global CSR strategy is helping to ensure that the company's partnerships with public-benefit organizations such as UNICEF, NGOs, and government agencies also add commercial value and contribute to the long-term viability of the company. When Unilever decided not to proceed with the launch of Lifebuoy in Nigeria in 2006, the company, UNICEF and beneficiaries missed a major opportunity to add greater value to the business, the partnership and the project. The anticipated participation of additional specialized Unilever human resources would have helped build greater mutual benefit in the partnership. The potential value of associating the project with a new Unilever soap brand was missed. Potential benefits from Unilever's global experience with hygiene/handwashing campaigns were not fully realized.
  - > **Recommendation:** *Future partnerships should ensure that there is a clear business case for private sector participation. By engaging core business competencies such as branding, marketing, sales and distribution, future partnerships will have greater opportunities for larger impact and scale through enhanced promotion and outreach.*
  - > **Recommendation:** *Future partnerships need to find ways to network with and learning from partnerships in other African countries via multi-stakeholder initiatives such as The Global Public-Private Partnership for Handwashing with Soap.*
- **Building a coherent and compelling strategy for UNICEF-private sector partnership:** UNICEF Nigeria is currently developing its new private sector strategy for 2009-2014, which includes a proposal for a Nigerian business leaders initiative for children. The active participation of UNICEF Nigeria's Private Sector Unit in the partnership with Unilever has helped to shape and strengthen the new private sector strategy. The need for greater coordination between WASH and the Private Sector Unit was recognized during the course of project implementation and this helped to improve communications with Unilever. The UNICEF-Unilever partnership experience has demonstrated the importance of UNICEF programme and private sector fundraising staff having a common understanding of the strategic and practical challenges of partnering with the private sector.
  - > **Recommendation:** *Future UNICEF partnerships with individual companies need to be clearly linked to the wider UNICEF Nigeria strategy of private sector engagement on children's issues. This should also facilitate greater learning and sharing about partnerships between UNICEF programme sections. UNICEF Nigeria needs to speak with one voice when initiating new private sector partnerships.*
  - > **Recommendation:** *UNICEF Nigeria should strengthen its internal networking within UNICEF globally to ensure greater learning about the organization's involvement in multi-stakeholder partnerships such as The Global Public-Private Partnership for Handwashing with Soap and the global partnership between UNICEF and Unilever.*

In addition to the three main cross-cutting themes identified above, there are a few additional issues that would benefit from further exploration by UNICEF and Unilever for any future collaboration.

In some cases, bilateral collaboration might prove the most effective use of resources as compared to more complex, multi-stakeholder partnerships. The latter would require considerable time and human resource investment by UNICEF and Unilever to ensure that other partners have the capacity to participate and contribute fully to the partnership decision-making and management processes.

Although Government and community counterparts may not need to become full partners in future bilateral arrangements between UNICEF and Unilever, the capacity development and institution building of government and community organizations are important prerequisites for the effective delivery of hygiene-related services at various levels. Bilateral partnerships must ensure that the capacity development of all relevant national and local actors is built into project design, delivery and evaluation.

A country-level partnership may benefit from the experience of global partnering processes but the former emerges within a particular geographic, cultural, political and socio-economic context. Global partnering principles and agreements can help inform local action, but local needs and capacities will inevitably influence the form and function of a partnership that must be fit for its particular purpose.

## UNICEF NIGERIA COUNTRY OFFICE

### Revised Summary of Terms of Reference (ToR)

#### **Study on the Partnership Between UNICEF and Unilever in Relation to Promotion of Hygiene and Handwashing in Nigerian Primary Schools**

##### **1. Objective of the Consultancy**

The objective of this consultancy is to evaluate the partnership between UNICEF and Unilever Nigeria in the implementation of Hygiene Promotion project in schools.

There are indications that the partnership might have produced some mutual benefits hence the need for this consultancy, which is to evaluate what both organizations have gained from the partnership in the course of implementing the hygiene promotion project, as well as key partnership implementation challenges.

##### **2. Scope**

The consultancy would be under the supervision of WASH Section of UNICEF and the Consultant would liaise closely with Unilever Nigeria Plc, and UNICEF Lagos office UNICEF private sector specialist. He/She is expected to consult with other identified stakeholders in carrying out the assignment. The consultant is expected to spend most of his/her time in Lagos with occasional travel to sites where project activities were implemented.

Under the supervision of Chief of WASH Section and in consultation with all the stakeholders, the Consultant will undertake the following assignments:

- Design of survey approach, work plan for the entire activity and discussion and agreement with UNICEF of the final design
- Conduct a desk review of relevant documents on WASH programme implementation such as Memorandums of Understanding between UNICEF and Unilever (global and Nigeria), Progress Reports, Unilever Annual Reports, and any other relevant documents on the partnership including related global initiatives involving UNICEF and Unilever;
- Design the research methodology and necessary tools for undertaking such a mission;
- Lead, organize and coordinate focus group discussions, consultations and meetings with all relevant stakeholders to obtain information on the Unilever/UNICEF Hygiene Promotion partnership including visits to Unilever and their distributors;



- Design and field test survey formats and coordinate field data collection, collation and analysis of data to help capture/collect post project information to document trends and business benefits of the partnership;
- Based on Unilever Nigeria's annual reports, published information, discussions with officials and other means of verification, analyze trends in their business and establish link (among other promotional strategies) of business benefits and the mutual benefits that can be attributed to the recently completed partnership with UNICEF;
- Based on desk reviews, field assessments/verifications and consultations with stakeholders, develop and analyze the preliminary framework and report for the study;
- Draft findings should be presented in a one day meeting to a team from UNICEF, Unilever and other partners for comments and inputs (tentatively scheduled for October 24 in Lagos);
- Finalize the draft report incorporating comments and inputs from stakeholders. The report should be analytical and detailed.

### **3. Time Schedule of Tasks and Report**

The suggested timeframe for the assignment/activities and the report requirements six weeks as follows:

1. Sharing, reviewing of documentation, and design of evaluation framework; desk reviews - **2 Weeks**
2. Fieldwork: data collection; and meetings with Unilever Nigeria, 1 workshop in Lagos - **2 Weeks**
3. Final analysis and compilation of data; develop draft report - **1 Week**
4. Report finalization & submission - **1 Week**

Based on the above schedule the consultant can spend a total of two weeks outside Nigeria in his/her duty station for cross-referencing, verification of global trends and similar partnerships as well as finalization of report. All the rest of the mission is to be spent in Nigeria. (i.e.; two weeks in consultant's home country and four weeks in Nigeria).

### **4 Outputs/Deliverables**

The expected outputs/deliverables of the consultancy should include;

- Work plan to achieve deliverables
- Survey framework and work plan for the entire activity to be revised following initial discussions with UNICEF and Unilever
- Draft findings for presentation at workshop in Lagos
- Workshop feedback summary for incorporation into final report
- Final report identifying potential linkages between Unilever Nigeria business benefits and partnership with UNICEF as well as mutual benefits for both partners, and key lessons learned from the development and implementation of the partnership.

## Annex B: Study Framework

### **Framework for the Study on the UNICEF-UNILEVER Partnership in relation to the campaign for Hygiene Promotion in Primary Schools in Nigeria<sup>25</sup>**

#### Partnership Overview

1. Partner organizations' details (Unilever & UNICEF)
2. Short description of the partnership project (title, location etc.)
3. Need being addressed
4. Project description including specific objectives
5. Unilever's role and resources/competencies brought
6. UNICEF's role and resources/competencies brought
7. Reason why Unilever chose this particular engagement. What were the anticipated business benefits of the partnership to Unilever?

#### Context, Development Process, Relationship and Implementation

1. Where did the idea come from? At global and/or national levels?
2. How was the original contact made between Unilever and UNICEF in Nigeria?
3. How was the partnership concept developed? What were the major stages, how long did each take?

4. What challenges were there in developing the partnership (both internal within Unilever, within UNICEF, and within the broader Nigerian context), and how were they overcome?

5. How well were internal and external expectations managed? Was there a clear understanding between Unilever and UNICEF over the scope of the partnership and the role and contribution of Unilever?

6. Were the original estimated resources to be provided by Unilever sufficient to achieve the objectives?

7. What might have been done differently to improve the efficiency of the development process (both internally and externally)?

8. Describe the quality of the relationship between Unilever and UNICEF, any challenges, and any actions taken to improve the relationship. What might have been done differently to improve the relationship? (e.g., appropriate communications, transparency, joint decision-making, warmth/strength of personal relationships, etc.)

9. How efficiently were the partnership and its activities implemented? What challenges were there and what might have been improved?

10. How was external communication handled

## Estimated Costs to Unilever

### 1. Development and other transaction costs (i.e. all time/costs outside actual project delivery)

Type	Details (e.g. x hours of person y etc.)	Financial Equivalent (\$)
<b>Unilever staff time</b>		
<b>Expenses or in-kind contribution (e.g. meeting/travel costs)</b>		
<b>Financial contribution</b>		
<b>Intangibles (e.g. social capital cost, negative publicity)</b>		
		Sub-total development / transaction

### 2. Project delivery costs

Type	Details (e.g. x hours of person y etc.)	Financial Equivalent (\$)
<b>Unilever staff time</b>		
<b>Expenses or in-kind contribution (e.g. meeting costs)</b>		
<b>Financial contribution</b>		
<b>Intangibles (e.g. social capital cost, negative publicity)</b>		
		Sub-total project delivery

## Benefits to Unilever

### 1. Project Benefits

Type	Type Details & Evidence (anecdotal, quantitative and qualitative)
<b>Reputational gain (with whom?)</b>	
<b>Positive publicity (e.g. media articles, appearance on UNICEF website, etc.)</b>	
<b>Stronger understanding of an issue or potential market opportunity</b>	
<b>Increased social capital</b>	
<b>Stronger connections and / or spin-off opportunities</b>	
<b>Increased employee motivation and/or knowledge</b>	
<b>Other</b>	

2. What could have been done to increase benefits to Unilever?

## Outcomes, Benefits and Costs to UNICEF

1. To what extent did the project achieve its objectives?

2. In which areas did the project not achieve its objectives and why?

3. What benefits beyond the project objectives did UNICEF gain?

Type Type Details & Evidence (anecdotal, quantitative and qualitative)

**Reputational gain (with whom?)**

**Positive / adverse publicity  
(e.g. media articles, appearance  
on Unilever website, etc.)**

**Stronger understanding of an issue  
or development potential**

**Increased social capital**

**Stronger connections and / or  
spin-off opportunities**

**Increased employee motivation  
and/or knowledge**

**Technology transfer**

**Other**

4. Could benefits to UNICEF have been stronger? How?

5. Were there significant transaction costs (i.e. costs involved in the development and management of the partnership/project) for UNICEF?

6. What would have been the approximate equivalent cost to UNICEF to achieve its objectives another way?

7. What was UNICEF's experience of working with Unilever? Were there any particular challenges to overcome? What could have been improved?

Lessons Learned: What other lessons can be drawn out from the experiences of the partnership?

1. Choice of project

2. Project development

3. Relationship and implementation

4. Maximizing benefits to Unilever and UNICEF

5. Internal Unilever procedures

## Annex C: People Consulted

### List of People Consulted

1. Dr. Suomi Sakai ; Country Representative, UNICEF Nigeria.
2. Dr. Robert Limlim; Deputy Representative, UNICEF Nigeria
3. Mohamed El-Fatih, Chief, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Section, UNICEF Nigeria, Abuja
4. Karim Akadiri, Assistant Representative, UNICEF Lagos Field Office
5. Zakariyah Olabisi Agberemi, Project Officer, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Section, UNICEF Nigeria, Abuja
6. Ier Jonathan-Ichaver, Private Sector Fundraising Specialist, UNICEF Nigeria, Lagos
7. Patrick Osuocha, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Specialist, UNICEF Lagos Field Office.
8. Adejumoke Alagbe, Private Sector Fundraising, UNICEF Nigeria, Lagos
9. Lawrencia Ofem, Consultant, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Section, UNICEF Nigeria, Abuja
10. Ameena Saidu, Consultant, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Section, UNICEF Nigeria, Abuja
11. Yemi Adeboye, Corporate Relations Manager, Unilever Nigeria Plc, Lagos
12. Ismael Bello, Brand Building Manager (Skin), Unilever Nigeria Plc, Lagos
13. Walter Gibson, Consultant, Global Health through Hygiene Programme, Unilever PLC, UK
14. Myriam Sidibe, Lifebuoy Global Social Mission Manager, Unilever Lifebuoy Handwashing Operations, Mumbai, India
15. Nicholas Dosumu, Director, Centre for African Settlement Studies and Development (CASSAD), Ibadan, Nigeria
16. Oluseyi Akintola, Centre for African Settlement Studies and Development (CASSAD), Ibadan, Nigeria
17. Ademola Ogungbiji, Head, Compliance, SIAO, Lagos, Nigeria

### **Key Guiding Principles: The Global Public-Private Partnership for Handwashing with Soap**

The key principles of the Global PPP initiative for Handwashing with Soap are outlined below.

#### **The philosophy**

- The countries' public sector taking the lead, with technical assistance and support from outside agencies
- Political commitment is required
- Building and integration on existing water and sanitation, infrastructure, school, etc. programs
- Programs are wide scale
- Public-private partnerships are only a tool
- The partnerships are inclusive
- All partners share information in a transparent manner
- There is a focus on measuring impact

#### **Transparency and equality of the partners**

- All research information and knowledge coming out of the new initiative is placed in the public domain in a timely manner, through the program website and other dissemination tools.
- All research information and knowledge arising out of the new initiative is open to other soap manufacturers.
- No branded soap products are used in the communication campaigns.

#### **Involvement of local soap firms**

- The focus is on the act of washing hands at critical junctures using whatever soap people like.
- The consultative process includes the small-scale sector at every stage since the outset
- All local manufacturers are welcome to participate in the program.
- The shift in consumption pattern with overall increase in market size of soaps for the private manufacturers won't have any detrimentally impact the small-scale sector.

Participating countries undertake the following steps to implement a PPP handwashing initiative:

1. The catalyst initiates discussion
2. Formation of a steering committee
3. Funds mobilization
4. Handwashing Behavior Study conduction (based on programme tools)



5. Communication strategy design
6. Testing and finalization of communication strategy
7. Execution, monitoring and evaluation

### **UNICEF Guiding Principles for Working with the Business Community**

There are two guiding principles for UNICEF to make sure we “get it right for children” when we work with the business community: the best ally, and the best alliance.

So we must ask ourselves two questions about every alliance we contemplate with the business community, whether it is a programmatic alliance, advocacy, fundraising support, or a contribution-in-kind. These questions will help us identify the best business community partners for UNICEF so that we can be proactive in developing and proposing opportunities to work together. They will also help us evaluate alliances that are proposed to UNICEF by members of the business community. And, moreover, these questions help us focus our attention on the kind of alliances that will have the greatest impact for children.

#### **IS THIS THE BEST ALLY for UNICEF?**

UNICEF actively seeks alliances with organizations whose behaviour, on balance, shows evidence of a willingness to exercise corporate social responsibility. Therefore we look for companies that demonstrate a commitment to, or affinity with, UNICEF’s core values. Thus, we must ask ourselves whether a company’s demonstrated behaviour is consistent with the principles on which UNICEF and the United Nations are based – and whether there is any reason that should make us hesitate about forming an alliance with the company.

#### **IS THIS THE BEST ALLIANCE for UNICEF?**

UNICEF seeks alliances which support our programme, advocacy, and fundraising goals. Thus, we must ask ourselves whether the proposed alliance helps UNICEF pursue (its mandate to advocate for the rights of children and women, and to help in meeting their basic needs) these goals.

UNICEF seeks alliances that are sufficiently beneficial to UNICEF – considering all areas of the help and support, direct and indirect, that the business community can offer to UNICEF. Every alliance involves some expenditure of UNICEF’s own resources, and most often that is the staff time required to establish and manage the alliance. We must be able to assess this cost and be reasonably certain that the benefits of each alliance substantially exceeds such cost. But it is important to keep in mind that many alliances bring long-term benefits, even though the immediate benefits might appear small.

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- <sup>2</sup> United Nations General Assembly (2005), 'Towards Global Partnerships' Resolution, Sixtieth session, Second Committee, Agenda item 59, A/C.2/60/L.38/Rev.1, p. 2.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 2.
- <sup>4</sup> See: B. Bull, M. Bøås, and D. McNeill (2004) 'Private Sector Influence in the Multilateral System: A Changing Structure of World Governance?' *Global Governance*, No. 10, pp. 481-498; J.M. Witte and W. Reinicke (2005) *Business Unusual: Facilitating UN Reform Through Partnerships*, UN Global Compact Office, New York; M.B. Sørensen, MB and S.M. Petersen (2006) *Partnering for Development – Making It Happen*, Copenhagen, UNDP.
- <sup>5</sup> *History of UNICEF in Nigeria*, <http://www.unicef.org/nigeria/about.html>, accessed 12 November 2008.
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- <sup>11</sup> Memorandum of Understanding between UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund and Unilever, 9 December 2004.
- <sup>12</sup> United Nations General Assembly (2005) 'Towards Global Partnerships' Resolution, Sixtieth session, Second Committee, Agenda item 59, A/C.2/60/L.38/Rev.1, p. 3.
- <sup>13</sup> These seven partnering principles have been adapted from three different sources: UN General Assembly (2005); Global Humanitarian Platform (2007) *Principles of Partnership: A Statement of Commitment*, [www.globalhumanitarianplatform.org](http://www.globalhumanitarianplatform.org) ; and R. Tennyson (2004) *The Partnering Toolbook*, London: The Partnering Initiative, International Business Leaders Forum.
- <sup>14</sup> This section of the report draws upon material sourced from the *New York Times* (see below) and the website of The Global Public-Private Partnership for Handwashing with Soap: <http://www.globalhandwashing.org>
- <sup>15</sup> C. Duhigg (2008) 'Warning: Habits May Be Good for You', *New York Times*, July 13, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/13/business/13habit.html>
- <sup>16</sup> *About Lifebuoy: History*, ConsumerLink Lifebuoy/Unilever website <http://www.lifebuoy.com/history.asp>
- <sup>17</sup> *About Lifebuoy: History*, ConsumerLink Lifebuoy/Unilever website <http://www.lifebuoy.com/history.asp>
- <sup>18</sup> Taken from the CHARTER document agreed between UNICEF & Unilever /Lifebuoy in 2007.

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<sup>19</sup> *Unilever Sustainable Development*, Unilever website  
<http://www.unilever.com/ourvalues/environment-society/>

<sup>20</sup> The actual percentage amounts of Unilever's financial contribution in relation to its total annual CSR budget for each year were: 24.08% in 2005; 22.69% in 2006; and 23.92% in 2007.

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