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Targeting both children and parents for better hygiene in India: Sesame Workshop's *Galli Galli Sim Sim*



India is home to the largest number of children in the world, including 20% of children aged 0–4 years old (1). About 48% of children in India suffer from some degree of malnutrition, and nearly 225 000 die every year due to diarrhoea. Those who survive repeated diarrhoeal episodes are more vulnerable to malnutrition and opportunistic infections, which severely affect cognitive development (2). Despite several awareness-raising campaigns targeted at improving hygiene practices, millions of families in India still have little or no access to essential services. As such, there has been little improvement in the overall reduction of child mortality due to preventable causes such as diarrhoea.

Sesame Workshop India has had proven success in improving health, hygiene, nutrition, literacy and school readiness in children through various outreach initiatives and the television programme *Galli Galli Sim Sim* (GGSS), the Indian adaptation of *Sesame Street*. Building on the success of the GGSS Radiophone Project, which reached over 1.4 million people through both community radio and mobile-based media, Sesame Workshop India is now expanding the initiative to include specific messaging on diarrhoea prevention and management. This includes 30 new radio episodes broadcast over eight community radio stations and a mobile-based voice response system (*Mobile Vaani*) with messages on how to store water safely, use chlorine-improved sanitation and hand washing, and why oral rehydration salts (ORS) and zinc are the best first-line treatments for diarrhoea.

How *Galli Galli Sim Sim* works

The programme uses an amalgamation of community radio, mobile technologies and the popular GGSS muppets to improve access to children's educational content and to help prevent diarrhoea in marginalized communities in central and northern India. Radio stations receive GGSS radio episodes along with technology support to improve interaction through telephone. In addition, the GGSS radio episodes are being made available to migrant communities in Madhya Pradesh – which fall outside of the radio broadcast range – through the Madhya Pradesh *Mobile Vaani* platform (MPMV). The programme targets children aged 0–8 years and their caregivers.

In India, diarrhoea cases rise during the end of monsoon season. Thus, the content for this programme will be delivered in two phases. In the first phase, the focus will be on improving awareness and knowledge by emphasizing messages on the use of chlorine to purify water and ORS as the first-line treatment. During the second phase, a more intensive campaign will be rolled out to promote behaviour change through GGSS radio episodes that target children and public service announcements that target parents/caregivers. This dual approach will be tracked through mobile-based surveys on MPMV and three community radio stations.

Supporting national public health programming

This programme targets Millennium Development Goal 4 – reducing mortality in children under the age of 5 (underfives) by two thirds. Although India's underfive mortality has declined since 1990, it is expected to fall short of the target of 42 deaths per 1000 live births by 2015 (2). The Government of India is working towards achieving this target through various projects, as are





Special GGSS episodes raise awareness of diarrhoea prevention and management



Phase 1 targets children through GGSS radio and Mobile Vaani broadcasts



Phase 2 targets parents/caregivers through public service announcements



Radio and mobile surveys track the two-pronged approach

various nongovernmental organizations. Sesame Workshop India's Radiophone Project has documented evidence of changing behaviour through quality audio content, resulting in better health and hygiene practices such as waste disposal, hand washing, establishing morning routines and making healthy food choices.

Partnerships for support and sustainability

To achieve sustained impact, Sesame Workshop India will also partner with other organizations to improve access to clean drinking water and ORS. The project will also partner with fast-moving consumer goods companies and pharmaceutical companies to improve access to chlorine tablets, ORS and zinc. With an effective on-air GGSS media campaign, supported by on-ground awareness activities and assured access to health services (chlorine, ORS and zinc), this model is replicable anywhere in the country.

IWG catalytic grant for mHealth programme scale-up

Sesame Workshop India was awarded a grant to scale up the GGSS programme in India by the United Nations Innovation Working Group's (IWG's) catalytic grant competition for maternal, newborn and child mobile health (mHealth), managed by the United Nations Foundation. Sesame Workshop India was successful in the grant competition because it employs an effective delivery strategy for an evidence-based child health intervention, combined with creative financing strategies to promote sustainability – elements that are critical for mHealth tools to contribute to Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5.¹ Through IWG, Sesame Workshop India is receiving assistance from the World Health Organization's Department of Reproductive Health and Research to optimize

¹ MDG 4 is to reduce child mortality; MDG 5 is to improve maternal health (www.unmillenniumproject.org/goals/gti.htm)

References:

1. The situation of children in India: a profile. New Delhi: UNICEF India; 2011 (http://www.unicef.org/india/The_Situation_of_Children_in_India_-_A_profile_20110630_.pdf, accessed 12 August 2014).
2. Water, environment and sanitation. In: UNICEF India [website]. New Delhi: UNICEF India; undated (<http://www.unicef.org/india/wes.html>, accessed 7 August 2014).

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State/District	Population targeted	Number of children targeted (0–8 years old)
Haryana	25.3 million	4.39 million
• Mewat	1.1 million	320 000
• Gurgaon	1.5 million	200 000
Himachal Pradesh	6.9 million	1.08 million
• Solan	500 000	80 000
Madhya Pradesh	72.6 million	14.21 million
• Shivpuri	1.7 million	380 000
Uttarakhand	10.1 million	1.78 million
• Tehri (Garwhal)	600 000	100 000
• Nainital	950 000	150 000
• Udham Singh Nagar	1.6 million	290 000
Uttar Pradesh	199.8 million	41.09 million
• Kanpur Dehat (rural)	1.6 million	270 000

Source: State data are from the 2011 Census; district data are estimated based on population data from the Census.

scale-up of the GGSS programme while contributing to the mHealth evidence base and best practices on implementation and scale-up. Please visit <http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/mhealth/en/> or <http://www.unfoundation.org/features/mhealth/iwg.html> for more information.

Partners: Ideosync, Gram Vaani Community Media Pvt. Ltd.

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