

*Saving lives  
with clean  
safe care at  
birth*

# Soap Matters

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Issue 13

## Training for Cleaning Staff

In our last newsletter we talked about our upcoming trip to The Gambia to adapt and pilot a manual developed to train cleaning staff in environmental hygiene and the basics of infection prevention and control (IPC). The trip went ahead at the end of April and was a great success.

The Ministry of Health IPC Task Group, Horizons Trust Gambia and Research Midwife, Dr Beverly Donaldson recruited by Soapbox to facilitate the pilot, developed hands-on, practical training for 'training the trainers' and training of cleaning staff, taking into account the low literacy level of cleaning staff.

'Clean Boxes' were developed for each module outlined in the manual including a module on hand hygiene, waste management, and the basics of environmental cleaning. Each Clean Box contained all the instructions and practical resources required for module delivery. Cleaning guidelines were also developed for the facilities which



previously had none, along with resources to be used for monitoring of cleaning practices following the training.

Two 'trainers' from four focus facilities were selected to receive training in the Clean Boxes and in turn deliver training to their cleaning staff. The trainers were public health officers, nurses and midwives.

The next stage of the pilot was to train staff involved in cleaning and IPC – orderlies, laundresses, and health labourers from within the participating facilities. These staff had received little or no formal training before.

Soapbox was there to witness the delivery of training to the first focus facility – Serrekunda Major Health Centre. The format of the three-day training was interactive and participatory, using very practical ways of demonstrating concepts such as the spread of invisible germs. Case studies, photographs and cleaning resources were used to encourage discussion which was lively and animated throughout the training.

Feedback from the trainers and training participants was overwhelmingly positive. Many reported that before the training they were not aware that their practices were potentially causing harm, with this new understanding immediate changes were seen within the facility and the trained participants were proud to report on their new, safe practices. An official evaluation of the pilot is underway which will feed in to the next iteration of the training package for application to other country contexts where formal training of cleaning staff is desperately needed.

## A sad farewell!

Soapbox was very sad to say goodbye to our MSc in Global Health and Management student, Liz McLeod, at the end of last month. Following her placement with us last year, Liz had been working in the Soapbox office on her MSc thesis; a systematic review of maternal hand hygiene around delivery

and in the postpartum period in low- and middle- income countries (LMICs). Liz's work will be used by Soapbox to inform the development of a hand hygiene intervention targeted towards mothers in LMICs. Liz goes on to start medical school in New Mexico in the coming weeks. We will really miss having Liz around the office and wish her all the very best for the future!

## MayFest 2016

On Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> of April, Elphinstone Hall at the University of Aberdeen was transformed into the "Hall of Mayhem", inviting children aged 4-15 to come and see all that it had to offer. The Hall of Mayhem was part of the fourth annual May Festival; a celebration of culture, food, science, sport, music and more. Among the face painting, boat making, comic book creating, and fungus investigating, Soapbox was there to challenge the visitors on their handwashing skills, and give them the chance to make their own felted soap!



Our tippy tap and happy taps were on display for everyone to try, providing the perfect way to educate children (and parents!) about hygiene practices in low-income, rural environments with little or no access to running water or developed infrastructure. The felted soap making also went down an absolute treat, offering children of all ages a chance to design and create their very own soap pebbles. After all the suds and the hard work of handwashing and felted soap making, we asked our visitors to investigate the world of germs, becoming Microbe Detectives. Our short quiz had its answers hidden away, invisible just like the harmful microbes on our hands, and only our detective torches could reveal the answers.

With over 1,150 visitors to the hall, the day was an outstanding success. We'd like to thank everyone who attended!



The Soapbox Collaborative



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## NHS Grampian Champions Challenged

Soapbox was present at the 8<sup>th</sup> Champions Challenged Conference which took place on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> June at the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre. The one day conference, organised by NHS Grampian, attracted around 260 delegates and included individuals from infection control teams, health protection teams, nursing and midwifery, university staff and students, and others interested in healthcare and infection prevention. The event provided a great opportunity for Soapbox to meet with delegates to discuss our own work around infection prevention in maternity units in low and middle income countries, and our partnership with NHS Grampian.

An engaging and thought-provoking programme was delivered from experts in the field of infection control. The programme reflected a balance of perspectives from both policy makers and those working on the ground. Healthcare Improvement Scotland and the Healthcare Environment Inspectorate discussed using the new Healthcare Associated Infection standards to drive improvement, while the Director of Infection Prevention and Control, British Pregnancy Advisory Service gave an entertaining presentation on 'Infection Control Gone Mad' and the practicalities of infection prevention on the ward from the presence of Christmas decorations to dogs and horses.



The final presentation of the day came from Gary Mortimer, Director of Acute Services, NHS Grampian (see photo), who gave a fantastic presentation on the 'Ethiopian Hygiene Quest'. Gary spoke about the work he and colleagues conducted during a trip, organised and funded by Soapbox, to Felege Hiwot Referral Hospital, Ethiopia to work on pressing maintenance issues and build capacity with the local maintenance team.

The conference was a great success and was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

## Zanzibar Needs Assessment

**Soapboxer Giorgia Gon reports on her trip to Zanzibar, where huge advancements are being made in hygiene practices within maternity wards.**

On the 12th of April I was lucky enough to attend the inception meeting for the 'HANDS' study in Zanzibar looking at drivers of hand hygiene compliance among birth attendants in maternity units. Here I had the opportunity to meet many of the stakeholders who were so enthusiastically involved with Soapbox's previous work in Zanzibar - the needs assessment of WASH and IPC in maternity units - and find out what happened after the needs assessment dissemination workshop.

Dr Dahoma, the Director of Preventive Services in Zanzibar, together with Dr Kabole, WaterAid Tanzania, summarized the results of this earlier needs assessment project. Two actions were agreed that concluded the needs assessment project in November 2014 - fixing and/or replacing the sinks in maternity units where none were functioning, and training orderlies who are involved in aspects of environmental hygiene but receive no formal training.

During my visit I saw how the Ministry of Health for Zanzibar (MoH), in collaboration with WaterAid, the Pemba Public Health Laboratory, and other partners, met these

aims head-on and then went much further. All nine of the maternity units with no functional sinks now have large 'trough' sinks with multiple taps; I had the chance to see the maternity unit in Chake Chake hospital and water was flowing from every sink. However the most impressive achievement for me was the eagerness and speed with which the MoH developed a cleaners training package and trained over 30 orderlies. With a low literate population, the decision to make the training 90% practical has proven to be a great success, comparable to the success of the approach taken by Soapbox.

In just over a year the Zanzibar MoH has proudly pushed the agenda for improving IPC in maternity units and in healthcare facilities as a whole, creating a safer and cleaner environment for births across the country. Soapbox was one of the organisations that helped catalyse this change, and I feel honoured to have been part of the journey.



## Ethiopia Update

In May this year, Soapbox was delighted to welcome on board Dr Ryan Ellis who is currently working for Soapbox in Ethiopia as part of our partnership work with Felege Hiwot Referral Hospital (FHRH) in Bahir Dar. The hospital, which despite its bed occupancy rate of 180%, putting huge pressure on the staff and resources, has become one of the country's leading hospitals. Ryan has been involved with numerous projects since he arrived in April to help support the improvements made to date.

The hospital has recently established its own Quality Improvement Department and with Soapbox's guidance, an Audit Committee has been established to help develop quality audit projects to enable improvements in all departments. In addition to this, a great deal of work is being achieved in the improvement of surgical and critical care services. FHRH has a large number of surgical cases and the hospital is making huge strides in addressing this need. Make sure to read more about Ryan's work on the Soapbox website.

## UCLan Midwifery Conference

Soapbox consultant Dr Beverly Donaldson will be speaking at the *UCLan Challenge Today, Change Tomorrow Midwifery Conference* in Preston on Wednesday 7th September. Dr Donaldson will be sharing her presentation on The Gambia, talking about Soapbox's work developing and implementing a training package for cleaning staff, as described overleaf. Tickets and more details about the conference can be found at [EventBrite.co.uk](http://EventBrite.co.uk).