

For the third annual Global Handwashing Day, more than 200 million schoolchildren, parents, teachers, celebrities and government officials around the world will lather up, but at the end of the day, they aim to have more than just clean hands.

This year the theme of Global Handwashing Day – more than just a day – aims to make the simple, life-saving practice of washing hands a regular habit long after the sun sets on October 15.

Global Handwashing Day partners are promoting this behavioural change not only by organizing activities in more than 80 countries to raise awareness of the benefits of handwashing, but by ensuring that schools and communities have the support they need to make the practice routine. Toward this end the Global Public-Private Partnership for Handwashing with Soap is rolling out new tools to help developing countries transform handwashing from a distracted daily act to a positive habit.

Each year, diarrhoeal diseases and acute respiratory infections are responsible for the deaths of more than 3.5 million children under the age of five. Washing hands with soap and water especially at the critical times -- after using the toilet and before handling food -- helps reduce the incidence of diarrhoeal disease by more than 40 per cent, yet this simple behaviour is not practiced regularly.

Global Handwashing Day shines a spotlight on the importance of handwashing with soap and water as one of the most effective and affordable health interventions. Today that message is being brought to playgrounds, classrooms, community centers, public spaces and the air waves. (...)

The website:

<http://www.globalhandwashingday.org/>