

SoaPen: Make handwashing a habit.

Mumbai, India Mumbai, India

Team SoaPen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3uNuy9VImug>



Year Founded:

2015

Organization type:

for profit

Project Stage:

Idea

Budget:

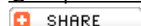
\$10,000 - \$50,000

Website:

<http://www.soapen.com>

Twitter:

@soapen2015

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Project Summary

Elevator Pitch

Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.

SoaPen is a teaching tool in the form of a soap-crayon that promotes the habit of washing hands with soap among children of the impressionable age of 3-6 years. We aim to reduce infant mortality rates by preventing the spread of infectious illnesses through behavioral change.

WHAT IF - Inspiration: Write one sentence that describes a way that your project dares to ask, "WHAT IF?"

What if we could solve the grave problem of infant mortality by making hand washing fun and interactive turning it into a habit!

About Project

Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?

Over 1.5 million children under the age of 5 die annually from infectious diseases (eg. diarrhea). 443 million school days every year are lost due to absenteeism. The simple habit of handwashing at 5 key times daily can prevent this. Since 40% of the infectious diseases are caught in schools, the habit needs to be taught there.

Solution: What is the proposed solution? Please be specific!

SoaPen is a creative teaching tool. Being markable on skin it is used to draw on a child's hand. Marks turn into soap when washing hands - forcing the child to wash for the ideal 20-40 seconds. Teachers can apply soap to a child's hand within the classroom & check if it has been done right by ensuring drawing has been fully washed off, without having to assist each child to the bathroom. Children can now wash their hands multiple times a day. A supporting illustrated mobile app/printed guide provides teachers with new activities to incorporate SoaPen into the existing curriculum. The increasing accessibility to smartphones empowers the App to reach teachers & students far & wide.

Awards

UNICEF Wearables for Good Innovation Winner 2015 - Funding for research and development and mentorship program by ARM, Frog Design and UNICEF.

Impact: How does it Work

Example: Walk us through a specific example(s) of how this solution makes a difference; include its primary activities.

SoaPen taps into a two-directional awareness flow: Children learn how to wash their hands in schools, they take their knowledge home and share it with their parents. SoaPen fulfills the 3 "R"s of habit formation: Reminder: The physical presence of SoaPen in the classroom encourages children to prompt the teacher to use it. Routine: The SoaPen App suggests innovative ways of using Soapen as a teaching tool on a daily basis to teach other parts of the academic curriculum, while simultaneously teaching personal hygiene. Reward: Children enjoy turning the drawing on their hands into foam, and the visually clear reward of clean hands.

Impact: What is the impact of the work to date? Also describe the projected future impact for the coming years.

SoaPen is in its development stage. We see SoaPen combatting present hygiene issues in schools, hospitals and community centres. With the increase in internet penetration among low-income rural & urban communities, the mobile application will train teachers about the need & importance of handwashing with soap in the absence of health workers. The app proposes numerous ways to incorporate SoaPen into existing class structure, ensuring the impact persists, by making it a part of the classroom ecosystem. Its simple design is highly scalable and low-cost. The packaging materials and manufacturing techniques can be adapted to the local availability of materials and resources, which will allow the product to reach as many hands as fast as possible.

Spread Strategies: Moving forward, what are the main strategies for scaling impact?

Handwashing is a habit that is critical to all children. SoaPen has been designed for easy adaptability, to enable it to impact diverse communities globally. SoaPen will be distributed through schools, hospitals & sold at retail stores. We hope to collaborate with NGOs to take SoaPen to communities in need globally while building ties with local retailers, to ensure that the users have someone to go to in case they need assistance. To keep the enthusiasm for SoaPen growing, we will be introducing new colors, fragrances, and additional features regularly.

Sustainability

Financial Sustainability Plan: What is this solution's plan to ensure financial sustainability?

Present funding is being used to set up production. Our initial target is schools, to whom the product will be sold at a subsidized rate through an annual subscription plan in return for monetary discounts, to ensure prolonged usage. A refill system for soap cartridges, will ensure people only pay for what they buy. Profits gathered from a developed world version of SoaPen, will help sustain & scale distribution among the masses at subsidized rates.

Marketplace: Who else is addressing the problem outlined here? How does the proposed project differ from these approaches?

Despite some amount of awareness & access to soap, low-income urban people, lack of proper hygiene habits such as handwashing. The shortfall is in the product form & placement, that is reaching them. SoaPen, placed in a classroom, allows the teacher to monitor children using the soap, preventing wastage and ensuring regular and proper use. Unlike normal soap which the child washes off in 2-4 seconds; with SoaPen the child spends an ideal 20-40 seconds removing all the marks. The supporting illustrated print guide/app overcomes language and literacy barriers reducing the need for health workers.

Team


Founding Story


We met while pursuing our Bachelors in Industrial Design, in New York. Our shared belief in the potential of good design to bring a positive change, kept us together for the summer of 2015 to collaborate for the Wearables for Good Challenge by UNICEF. We were very moved by the fact that so many young lives could be saved just by creating awareness and promoting good handwashing habits. Our brainstorming sessions & our desire to tackle this serious issue by adding a little fun to the solution, led to SoaPen. We were named winners of the competition, & are in the process of putting together a team of chemical engineers and strategy experts to implement the product in India.


Team

The team comprises of Amanat Anand, Shubham Issar, Junho Byun and Yogita Agrawal. We are all Industrial Designers by profession, and we co-founded and designed SoaPen. As the project is still in its early research and developmental stage, we are all working part time and dedicate our nights and mornings to SoaPen. Amanat and Shubham are based in New York, Junho in Los Angeles, and Yogita is based in Mumbai. We are currently putting together the team and are actively seeking a chemical engineer to industrialize the soap composition. We will all be working full time on this project starting January 2016.

File attachments:

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 [product_mockup_soapen.jpg](#)

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