To mark Global Handwashing Day 2013 in Osun State, Nigeria Partnership for Child Development, UNILEVER and Osun State Government organised a day of celebration seeing over 650 school-age children from 37 secondary schools alongside artisans and market women take part in community awareness raising activities on the impact of handwashing with soap on child survival and the prevention of life threatening diseases.

Speaking at the ceremony, Governor of Osun State, Ogbeni Rauf Aregbesola said, “Sickness and diseases are primarily caused by what we eat, hygiene and the state of our environment. It is therefore important to wash our hands with soap at critical times during the day.”

On the day speeches were made from WASH experts and key Osun State officials, who also gave demonstrations emphasising the effectiveness of handwashing and on the particular focus of washing hands at certain critical times of the day, children were also decorated with badges to indicate them as change agents in their schools and respective communities.

Global Handwashing Day - Opportunities for Further Action

As part of efforts to celebrate the day and change hygiene behaviour, private company UNILE
VER through its Lifebuoy soap, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Osun State Government, which facilitated by PCD sees a common vision to improve the health and wellbeing of Nigerian children through implementation of integrated school health education and behavioural change activities around hygiene, oral care, nutrition and sustainable energy consumption.

In the lead up to the day, partners also visited schools covered by the O'Meals programme in the State, where over 600 pupils were selected for handwashing demonstrations carried out by the representative of the Nigeria Women Medical Association, these visits introduced pupils to a glow germ kit test so they could see for themselves the impact of using soap and water. Pupils were also sampled with UNILEVER's lifebuoy soaps, exercise books, pens and IEC materials to help reinforce the habits.

Related Press for Osun State's Global Handwashing Day

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- Unilever signs MoU with Osun on children's health
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