
Essity foreword

Time to put insights into actions

As a leading global hygiene and health company we, at Essity, have gathered knowledge and insights to drive a global dialogue about the strong connection between hygiene, health and well-being. In 2017 we educated more than 2.5 million people about hygiene and health, including teaching children the importance of hand hygiene to young women about puberty as well as educating people and staff at nursing homes about incontinence. We collaborate with partners, using our different perspectives, collective competences and resources to raise awareness, develop standards and influence regulations in relation to health and hygiene, thereby improving well-being and the lives of millions worldwide.

Every day, millions of people across the globe miss work, school or social interactions because of concerns or hinders relating to hygiene and health. These can be the result of a lack of access to fundamental necessities, like clean water and toilets, or limited or no access to hygiene and health products. Overcoming cultural stigmas surrounding areas such as menstruation and incontinence is essential for personal and societal progress. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide an excellent framework for ensuring public progress as well as individual well-being.

To be relevant and achieve the best outcome we have chosen to work specifically with the goals that are closest to our area of expertise and business. In this report we will specifically focus on three of these goals: 3, 5 and 6. As a company we contribute in different ways. We strive to supply customers and consumers with responsible and resource efficient solutions, products and knowledge. With our partners, such as the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) and the United Nations Foundation, we share knowledge and raise awareness about what is needed to achieve the SDGs. We believe that delivering on the SDGs creates business opportunities that make the world a better place for everyone.

Together we have a unique understanding of what it takes with regards to hygiene and health to create a society where everyone has equal opportunities to realize their basic human needs and rights. Now we need to continue to put those insights into action. To achieve an even greater impact, we invite stakeholders to participate in the dialogue and push forward to raise hygiene and health standards worldwide.

The focus of this report is on health and hygiene throughout the course of life and what we all can do to contribute.



Magnus Groth
President and CEO
Essity

WSSCC foreword

Putting people at the centre

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are two years old, and already we are seeing incredible progress towards the 2030 agenda. Countries around the world are developing national plans to respond to the SDGs and sharing successes and lessons with others, indicating a collective spirit to transform the world. Partnerships are forming between government, international entities, private sector, academia and civil society... there seems to be a collective message: We cannot do it alone. Activists, students, influencers and citizens are working together, leading campaigns and using their voices to speak out on issues that matter to them; health, education, gender equality, climate change and peace, just to name a few. Collective action is everywhere.

Amidst the progress, there is still work to be done. SDG 6 (on Water and Sanitation) is one of these areas. 4.5 billion people globally still lack safely managed sanitation, and poor hygiene practices have devastating effects on individual health and well-being, on malnutrition and child-mortality and contribute to growing societal concerns around disease outbreaks.

Women, girls and people in vulnerable situations (SDG 6.2) are of particular concern. Imagine the young girl who menstruates for the first time at age 12. She has no prior information about her period as, contrary to common beliefs, in many countries fewer than half of the girls have been told about menstruation from their mothers before menarche. The gendered societal norms in her community indicate that she is impure and cannot participate in certain social gatherings; that she should not eat or touch certain foods; that she cannot cook or help in the kitchen or should not bathe for a week because of the mistaken belief that

washing while menstruating increases the risk of infertility. Imagine the elderly woman who works in a rural market selling her vegetables. She must stay in her stall to make money each day, and yet the market has no facilities, no toilets. Sometimes she stops drinking water, despite the heat, so she will not have to use the toilet.

We cannot talk about changing policies and practices without keeping people in mind, without consulting them, without understanding their needs and without understanding prevailing beliefs and practices. The 2030 Agenda calls us all to think differently, to act differently and to partner differently. The Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) and Essity formed a partnership in 2014 in order to do just this. Putting hygiene and health at the centre of the conversation means more emphasis on forgotten and taboo topics; it opens up possibilities for change that reaches far beyond just individuals, but to society as a whole. Hygiene is only the beginning.



Rolf Luyendijk
Executive Director
WSSCC

About the report and the collaboration



This report is the latest edition in a series of reports that Essity has been publishing since 2008 with the aim to raise awareness about the pivotal role hygiene, sanitation, and health play for well-being, for individuals and communities and to bring forward solutions to some of the problems we face in these areas.

Since 2014, Essity and WSSCC have partnered in the mission to encourage a global conversation about hygiene and health issues as well as opportunities across organizations, sectors, and countries. In 2016 we took the partnership further by jointly publishing the *Hygiene Matters Report: Joining Forces for Progress*.

With this edition of the report, we continue our work. We offer new insights by combining research findings, statistical evidence, successful cases and testimonies

from people whose voices are rarely heard. We also highlight solutions and actions that we find critical for improving hygiene and health standards across the globe and for every part of life's course. Our ambition is to inspire and invite more actors into the dialogue, partnership and in finding sustainable solutions going forward.

In the Sustainable Development Goal era, it is essential to work together and we are brought together by our belief that we can leverage each other's strengths. Together and individually we will put the insights and solutions of this report to use in public awareness campaigning, policy advocacy, and our community work.

**You can read more about our work at
www.essity.com and www.wsscc.org**

**Insights
gathered
from**

**20
countries**

- Australia
- Belgium
- Brazil
- China
- France
- Germany
- India
- Italy
- Kenya
- Mexico
- The Netherlands
- Pakistan
- Russia
- Senegal
- Spain
- South Africa
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- United Kingdom
- United States



About the survey

One of the sources for this report is a global survey conducted by Essity between November 20 and December 4, 2017, through web panels in 15 countries, collecting answers from a total of 15,530 respondents. National quotas have been used to obtain an accurate representation of age and gender of the general public aged 16-85 years. The countries surveyed included Australia,

Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Mexico, The Netherlands, Russia, Spain, South Africa, Sweden, United Kingdom, and United States. The survey was monitored and analyzed by the consulting firm, United Minds, and the data was collected through digital questionnaires with the assistance of the survey provider, Cint.