

Collaboration for positive change

In this report, Essity and WSSCC partner to put global hygiene and health issues in the spotlight. The unprecedented pandemic has indeed underlined the importance of hygiene and health in our lives. How is this reflected in this report?

Magnus: We are highlighting two themes in this report – how hygiene and health can save and improve lives and how all of us collectively can contribute to more inclusive societies. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted that millions of women, men and children face obstacles in their daily lives due to basic hygiene and health-related constraints. The right actions can improve hygiene and health conditions globally and benefit both individuals and society.

Sue: The COVID-19 pandemic is also a wake-up call to re-focus on what is essential for preventive health. The pandemic has underlined the importance of the fundamental practices learned since childhood, such as handwashing with soap, in promoting basic hygiene to combat infections all around the world. It is also times like these where we appreciate well-resourced and competent health services and count on them to save lives.

Magnus: The time for prioritizing and investing in hygiene and health is certainly now. The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting all of us and the full humanitarian, economic and social consequences are obviously to be seen. One thing is for sure: improved hygiene and health standards as well as awareness and education will be more important than ever.

Essity and the WSSCC have partnered since 2014 and both have been working on global hygiene and health issues for decades. What is the added value of collaborating and what role do the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) play?

Sue: The SDGs provide an opportunity to accelerate progress on some of the world's most critical issues: poverty, education, health, sanitation and hygiene, gender equality, etc. We know that many of these issues are cross-cutting, and that addressing them in silos hasn't worked in the past. The SDGs are a call to action to stakeholders from all backgrounds: governments, UN, civil society, academia, private sector to work together to collectively implement solutions that benefit society and our planet. We continue to work with Essity to suggest actions, provide evidence and amplify messages, especially in the dialogue with key decision-makers.

Magnus: The SDGs create a structure for driving actions and partnerships, which are critical to success. As a UN-hosted entity, the WSSCC supports programs on the ground and collaborate broadly across sectors to accelerate progress on sanitation and hygiene at national, regional and global levels.

Sue: Essity brings power of innovation as well as customer and market knowledge for hygiene and health solutions. They are an ethical international business leader with a person-centered approach to research and development. With their network of professionals around the world they are able to reach audiences and question social norms. It is essential for large-scale progress on these issues, and we feel that our complementarity as partners strengthens our work.

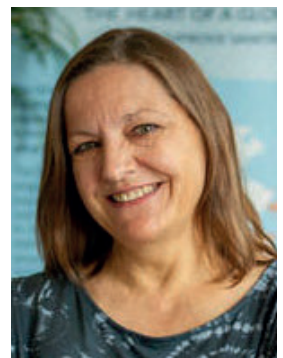
What needs to be done and who should act?

Sue: The basic requirements to achieve good hygiene and health conditions are universal and the actions must be at all levels: individual, community, national, regional and global. We now need to work together to ensure policies that continuously drive an inclusive public health approach that focuses on prevention. Concrete preventive actions need to be planned for, prioritized, financed and implemented everywhere for the benefit of everyone.

Magnus: There is a renewed opportunity to prioritize hygiene and health for all, and the suggested calls to action for policy makers are outlined in this report. We continue to advance knowledge and facilitate solutions in order to support more inclusive societies and break barriers to health and well-being. We invite you to take part in this important mission.



Magnus Groth
President and CEO
Essity



Sue Coates
Executive Director a.i.
WSSCC



Essity in brief

Essity is a leading global hygiene and health company dedicated to improving well-being through its products and services. The company has sales in approximately 150 countries and employs about 46,000 people. Essity breaks barriers to well-being and contributes to a healthy, sustainable and circular society. Essity is committed to contribute to the UN SDGs and have specifically focused on the SDGs where its business and operation can contribute such as SDG 3, 5, 6, 12, 13 and 15.

www.essity.com

WSSCC in brief

The Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) is a global United Nations-hosted multi-stakeholder membership and partnership organization. It works with poor people, organizations, governments and local entrepreneurs to improve sanitation and hygiene at scale and is dedicated to advancing Sustainable Development Goal 6 and specifically Target 6.2 on sanitation and hygiene.

WSSCC advocates for improved sanitation and hygiene, paying special attention to the needs of women, girls and people in vulnerable situations. In 2021, the WSSCC will transform into the Sanitation and Hygiene Fund (SHF).

www.shfund.org **www.wsscc.org**

The need for a decade of action

We all have a part to play in making the 2020s a decade of action and to achieve results. The UN Secretary General's 2020 Progress Report¹ stated that even if progress in many areas of health continues, the rate of improvement has slowed down. Additionally, the start of the decade has been plagued by COVID-19, and we share the concern that the pandemic threatens progress on health made in recent years. However, we believe that together, we can break health and hygiene barriers and support the empowerment of people in order to achieve an inclusive society that releases both individual and societal value.

The year 2020 marks the tenth Hygiene and Health Report and six years of collaboration between Essity, WSSCC and our other partners to raise awareness on global hygiene and health issues. The continuous learnings made now and in recent years add value and have the potential to contribute toward a decade of action to bring about positive change and achieve the SDGs. It is time to accelerate action to improve hygiene and health for all.

SDG Target 17.17: Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships.



Action on global challenges

Globalization, digitalization, population growth, urbanization, climate change and increasing resource scarcity continue to affect us all in different ways and our attitudes toward global hygiene and health. We are faced with a less secure world based on political, social and financial instability, while at the same time, the SDGs must be met by 2030. The full humanitarian, social and financial consequences of COVID-19 remains to be seen but it has further underlined the importance of hygiene and health in our everyday lives.

Much progress has been made, for example in reducing poverty and increasing child vaccinations, but progress in hygiene and health is lagging.

There are many global challenges related to hygiene and health. In this report, we focus on issues where there is a clear need for accelerated action and we provide policy makers with concrete calls for actions after each of the two chapters *Hygiene and health saves and improves lives* and *More inclusive societies*.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced this message more strongly than ever. We belong to each other. We stand together, or we fall apart.”

**António Guterres,
UN Secretary General ²**

About this report

This report aims to address topical societal issues, showcase different perspectives and discussions. It also raises awareness about the pivotal role hygiene, sanitation and health can play in well-being for individuals and communities and provides solutions to some of the challenges and opportunities society faces in these areas.

By combining research findings, statistical evidence, successful case stories as well as testimonies from people who can contribute to advancing progress on hygiene and health issue, this report offers new insights. It also highlights solutions and action that can be critical for improving hygiene and health standards around the globe. Our ambition is to inspire and invite more actors to collaborate, share insights and expertise and accelerate action to ensure hygiene and health for all.

The global Essity survey

Essity conducts a global survey called the Essentials Initiative Survey (hereafter referred to as 'the Essity survey') every second year, to provide knowledge about attitudes, preferences and habits around the world. Some of the key findings from the Essity survey are highlighted in this report.

The questionnaire was conducted digitally with about 15.000 respondents from 15 country markets between December 2019 and January 2020. Just over 1.000 responses were gathered from each market and national quotas were used to obtain a balanced representation of age and gender. A mean average for each question was calculated to obtain the survey figures.

The countries surveyed included Australia, Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, Russia, Spain, South Africa, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States.

An additional survey was conducted in July 2020 with hygiene and health questions concerning COVID-19. There were about 10.000 respondents in ten countries – France, Germany, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, Russia, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States. Quotas were used to obtain a balanced representation of age and gender.

The full results of the two surveys can be found at <http://reports.essity.com/2020-21/essentials-initiative-survey/results>.





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Magnus Groth, President and CEO Essity



Breaking Barriers to Well-being