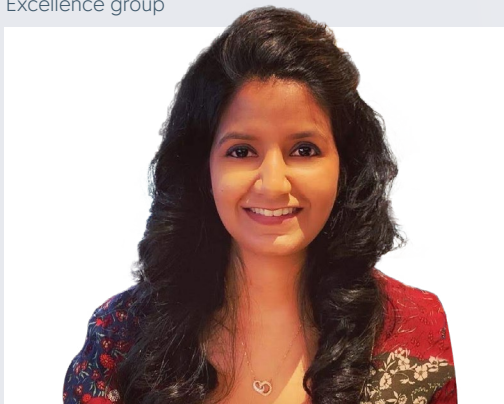


CASE STUDY

REDEFINING 'WOMEN'S WORK'



Efrain Ayala
Head of Diversity and Inclusion for Reckitt's Marketing Excellence group



Anushree Dewen
Global Senior Brand Manager, Harpic

In developing countries around the world, Reckitt is using its brand influence to educate, inspire and improve the lives of millions of people.

They are shocking facts: today 771 million people – 1 in 10 of the world's population, lack access to safe water – and 1.7 billion people – 1 in 4 – lack access to a toilet.

Our goal is to make access to the highest quality hygiene, wellness and nourishment a right, not a privilege. Since 2018, Reckitt has put that pledge into action together with Water.org.

A global non-profit founded by Matt Damon and Gary White, Water.org works with microfinance institutions to offer solutions that break down the financial barriers between people living in poverty and access to safe water and sanitation. Reckitt has been working with Water.org and its partners in India, Indonesia and Kenya to help people access safe water and sanitation, including supporting them to build water tanks and toilets in their homes and communities.

Who does the dirty work?

Harpic's Global Senior Brand Manager Anushree Dewen explains why access to sanitation is very much a gender issue.

"It goes without saying that everyone without this basic human right is affected, and it is much worse for some than others," she says. "Without access to a safe toilet at home, it is disproportionately harder for women and girls to lead safe, productive and healthy lives. Open defecation places them in danger, as they often face harassment and assault.

"And since women are disproportionately affected by this, it is really important that women are involved in decision making when it comes to improving sanitation solutions in communities. This ensures the solutions address the issues women and girls face.



CASE STUDY REDEFINING 'WOMEN'S WORK' continued

"We have a huge opportunity to change perceptions and move the dial on gender equality in the societies we serve."

"We must challenge the stigma and taboos around women and sanitation to overcome harmful practices. With increased skills and confidence, women will be able to play a visible role in making lasting change happen in their communities."

Financial and practical help

Reckitt has provided funding of just under US\$3.9 million to Water.org, alongside on-the-ground support to help families and communities build their own safe, hygienic latrines and water storage facilities.

Reckitt's support enables Water.org to partner with financial institutions to design solutions suitable for women from low-income families. These women can make informed decisions to take loans out with terms that suit their situation and then invest in new or improved access to water or sanitation at home. This empowers them with more time, because they spend less time collecting water, and/or more money, because they no longer need to pay high prices to secure the water they need to survive.

The financial institutions, in turn, increase their client base with a commercially viable product, and expand the model by training staff in the product and how to inform potential clients of the benefits it could provide.

In India and Indonesia, Reckitt and our brand Harpic help train networks of community health facilitators, mainly women. They go deep into communities and villages, teaching women about the importance of safe access to water and toilet hygiene, what type to build and what loans are available to help them do so. They also receive guidance on how to clean and maintain the toilet, giving them 'ownership' of the solution.

"Water collection and toilet cleaning are often relegated to a particular community or gender," adds Anushree. "It's not looked at as the responsibility of every individual in a household, just women. We want to encourage everyone to own the task."

As a result of Reckitt's practical and financial support, 962,000 lives will have been changed between 2018 and 2022, despite the restrictions and additional challenges presented by COVID-19.



Jackline lives with her family in the Eastern province of Kenya. She endured a daily two-hour round trip to collect 20 litres of water from a shallow pond until she received a microfinance loan of around US\$210 (about 1.5 times her monthly household income) to install a 3,000-litre rainwater harvesting tank, enabling her family and 15 others to access safe water.

CASE STUDY REDEFINING 'WOMEN'S WORK' continued



Anita and her family live in Karnataka, India. She used to spend thousands of rupees on doctor's visits when her family fell ill as a result of poor sanitation conditions. With access to an affordable loan with low monthly payments, Anita installed a household tap and private toilet. Now, she can save that money and ensure her family stays healthy and nourished.

Changing perceptions

As one of the world's most trusted hygiene brands with a huge presence in India and Indonesia, Harpic and Reckitt's commitment to a cleaner, healthier world is inextricably linked to the issue of gender equality. In total, 70% of our purchasers are women, and the vast majority of our brands are used by women. We have a huge opportunity to change perceptions and move the dial on gender equality in the societies we serve.

Efrain Ayala, who heads up Diversity and Inclusion for Reckitt's Marketing Excellence group, notes that, globally, women and young girls spent up to three times as many hours doing unpaid domestic work than men, according to the International Labour Organization – and that was pre-COVID-19.

"In all marketing activity, we have a duty to ensure that household chores and cleaning are not depicted as the work of one gender," he says. "We have to avoid propagating the gendered stereotype that keeps young girls and women having to do unpaid domestic labour that fundamentally takes away time for them to be educated, get jobs and build financial equity for themselves.

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"The Harpic team is doing this by helping communities build their own toilets, which relates to its specific commitment to make sure women and girls are not left behind."

Reckitt's commitment to gender balance doesn't only focus on our own people. It's integral to our brands' values externally, too.

By harnessing the power of Reckitt's market-leading hygiene and wellness brands, we don't only ensure that women who work at Reckitt enjoy greater equality in pay and career opportunities. We can extend our commitment by positively impacting the lives of women through partnerships like the one with Water.org.

In the long run, we can change the perception of what 'women's work' really means.