

# Brush Day & Night Phase III to Phase IV: ensuring that good oral health habits are sustainable

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Over the past 10 years, the FDI-Unilever Brush Day & Night partnership has significantly influenced the life of children worldwide through the implementation of school programmes for oral health education and prevention. This article reports the key facts and outcomes of Phase III of the partnership, and announces the launch of Phase IV. During Phase III, the expert advisors of the Brush Day & Night partnership conducted a longitudinal study to evaluate the impact of the '21 Day' programme in almost 8,000 children in 10 countries. Analysis revealed the effectiveness of the 21 Day programme in sustainably educating children to brush their teeth twice a day, with the greatest impact observed in children aged 7–9 years. With the launch of Phase IV, the Brush Day & Night partnership will continue to deliver its oral health school programme for 7–9 year-old children with a strengthened methodology, including randomized sampling and control groups. The scope of the evaluation will be broadened to include oral health-related quality of life indicators, and monitoring of the oral health knowledge of children's parents/carers.

**Key words:** World Oral Health Day, 21-Day programme, oral health education and prevention, oral health advocacy, public–private partnership

## THE BRUSH DAY & NIGHT PARTNERSHIP: DOING WELL BY DOING GOOD

The FDI–Unilever Brush Day & Night partnership is a unique partnership that achieves innovative outreach with significant impact<sup>1–4</sup>. Throughout the partnership, which has been running for over 12 years, the partners have: implemented sustainable oral health education and promotion programmes worldwide; positively impacted the oral health of target populations; raised awareness of oral health education and engaged the dental community and general public in education activities; trained and involved dentists in public health programmes; and informed national and global oral health advocacy with the production of evidence and data<sup>1,2,5,6</sup>.

During this time, measurable, positive effects of the partnership on the lives of children worldwide have been observed. The World Health Organization (WHO), the world's directing and coordinating health authority, has also recognized the positive impact of the partnership's initiatives. Dr Margaret

Chan, former Director General of WHO, singled out the partnership for praise in her opening speech at the 2012 Annual World Dental Congress in Hong Kong<sup>7</sup>.

## BRUSH DAY & NIGHT PHASE III: KEY FACTS AND OUTCOMES

Thanks to the supportive partnership framework and outstanding collaboration between National Dental Associations and Unilever local teams on school programmes and World Oral Health Day (WOHD) activities in 22 countries (*Table 1*), over 4 million people benefited from oral health education and prevention messages between 2014 and 2016.

Throughout this 3-year period, the Phase III expert advisors conducted a longitudinal study on a significant sample of almost 8,000 school children to evaluate the impact of the partnership. In particular, they evaluated the effectiveness of the 21 Day programme in Bangladesh, Chile, Greece, Indonesia, Morocco, Myanmar, Nigeria, The Philippines,

**Table 1** Overall estimated outreach in each country of the partnership Phase III

NDA name	Country	School programme	WOHD	Overall estimated Phase III outreach based on figures reported by NDA
Bangladesh Dental Society	Bangladesh	✓	✓	2,500
Colegio de Cirujano Dentistas de Chile	Chile	✓	✓	2,780
Hellenic Dental Association	Greece	✓	✓	156,179
The Stomatological Society of Greece				
Indonesian Dental Association	Indonesia	✓	✓	585,971
Association Marocaine de Prevention Bucco-dentaire	Morocco	✓	✓	47,857
Myanmar Dental Association	Myanmar	✓	✓	1,000
Nigerian Dental Association	Nigeria	✓	✓	29,000
Philippines Dental Association with Philippines Pediatric Dental Society	Philippines	✓	✓	NA
Turkish Dental Association	Turkey	✓	✓	NA
Vietnam Odonto-Stomatology Association	Vietnam	✓	✓	1,005,000
Croatian Dental Chamber and Croatian Dental Society	Croatia	–	✓	NA
Hungarian Dental Association	Hungary	–	✓	4,202
Association des Odonto-Stomatologistes de Cote d'Ivoire	Cote d'Ivoire	–	✓	2,000
Cambodian Dental Association	Cambodia	–	✓	14,000
Egyptian Dental Association with Egyptian Society of Pediatric Dentistry & Children with Special Needs	Egypt	–	✓	5,000
Ethiopian Dental Professionals' Association	Ethiopia	–	✓	10,500
Ghana Dental Association	Ghana	–	✓	14,234
Associazione Nazionale Dentisti Italiani	Italy	–	✓	NA
Jordan Dental Association	Jordan	–	✓	> 50,000 (500 schools and 500 dentists)
South African Dental Association	South Africa	–	✓	2,100,000
Sri Lanka Dental Association	Sri Lanka	–	✓	131,000
Sudanese Dental Union	Sudan	–	✓	NA
Total				> 4,112,130

The reported figures combine figures from school programme reports and estimated outreach of the WOHD events realised by National Dental Associations for the whole Phase III duration.

Turkey and Vietnam. This evaluation revealed a 25% improvement in the number of school children who brushed their teeth twice-daily following the first 21 Day intervention. Furthermore, this improvement was generally sustained over 6–12 months. The results showed that the programme was most effective in 7–9 year-olds.

### MOVING FORWARD TO THE NEXT PHASE

FDI and Unilever are extremely proud to be part of such a unique public–private partnership that effectively improves children's oral health on a global scale. Moving forward on this successful journey, all partnership stakeholders look forward to the next phase (Phase IV), which will run from 2017 to 2019. It will continue to educate children to brush their teeth twice-daily with a fluoride toothpaste, and engage the dental profession, the public and policy-makers on a large scale to improve oral health worldwide.

Phase IV of the Brush Day & Night partnership will build upon the success of Phase III to improve the methodology, impact and outcomes of the programme, and set additional measurable objectives. It will focus on sustaining the programme for school

children aged between 7 and 9 years, given that the greatest effectiveness was observed in this age group, and on strengthening the programme's methodology. In particular, the robustness of the longitudinal study will be enhanced with the randomized sampling of children and inclusion of control groups. The examiners conducting the interventions and collecting the data will attend dedicated workshops to harmonize the data collection and further assure the quality of the datasets. Finally, Phase IV seeks to broaden the scope of the evaluation by monitoring and measuring the impact of children's improved oral health knowledge on the oral health knowledge of their parents/care-givers, and assessing if children's improved oral health positively improves aspects of their quality of life.

FDI and Unilever look forward to continuing to spread the important message of twice-daily brushing in Phase IV, and improving oral health care among children worldwide.

It is unacceptable that oral disease affects almost 4 billion people worldwide<sup>8</sup>, and FDI and Unilever are committed to continuing their work together, in partnership with National Dental Associations, to educate people and engage with health authorities for the improvement of oral health.

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## Conflict of interest

Sinead Malone is employed by Unilever Oral Care.

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