Nudging a Habit
Handwashing at Schools

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Vietnam
Outline of the Presentation

- What we did (brief video)
- Methodology
- Highlights of results
- Recommendations
A Quick Look at What We Did & How We Did It
Main Research Questions

Inspired by the Initial Study in Bangladesh (Dreibelbis et al. 2016)

1. Do NUDGEs work only in a specific social/cultural setting or are the results more universal?
2. After a long time with NUDGEs, will behavior last if we remove the nudges => i.e. have we created a HABIT?
3. Are we sure that we don’t just observe a Hawthorne effect?
4. Is there a novelty effect of the NUDGEs?
5. Do children fail to wash their hands with soap after latrine visits because there is no convenient place to wash the hands and there is no soap?
Treatment Groups

- No Nudges
  - 6 schools => baseline only
  - 2 schools => baseline and 5 months observation

- Nudges
  - 2 schools => baseline, nudges removed after 6 weeks, final observation 1 month after nudges removed
  - 2 schools => baseline, nudges removed after 4 months, final observation 1 month after nudges removed
  - 2 schools => baseline, nudges in place 5 months

Note: Baseline repeated!
Nudges Tailored to Each School

- Different for each school
- Key elements:
  - Foot prints
  - Hand prints
  - Kids friendly pictures
Research Approach

- KAP survey (self administered) filled in by all 5th graders
- Observation of handwashing behavior
  - 12 periods during school day
  - Status of latrines (water, cleanliness, smell)
  - Availability of soap and water recorded for each period
  - Weather conditions during each period
- Separate records for boys and girls
  - Number of latrine visits (urination and defecation)
  - Number of students washing hands after latrine
  - Number of students washing hands with soap after latrine visit

• Note: Children go home during 2-1/2 hour lunch break
Effect of Nudges

Percent of Students Washing Hands with Soap

- VN Girls
- VN Boys
- VN All Students
- VN Caretakers (Chase & Do)
- BD Pilot (Dreibelbis)
- BD Large (Grover)
# Regression Results (% of Students Washing with Soap)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Rounds (14 Schools)</th>
<th>Rounds 2-5 (8 Schools)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>42.6 ***</td>
<td>41.8 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nudges</td>
<td>+27.4 ***</td>
<td>+27.7 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nudges have been removed</td>
<td>+1.5</td>
<td>+2.1 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance to HW place &gt; 10 m</td>
<td>-12.1 ***</td>
<td>No control &gt; 10 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance &gt; 10 m &amp; nudges</td>
<td>-17.6 ***</td>
<td>-30.1 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rain</td>
<td>-11.0 ***</td>
<td>-7.8 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dummy for Round 0</td>
<td>+79.5 ***</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dummy for Round 1</td>
<td>+38.3 ***</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher warning</td>
<td>+54.7 ***</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** Significant at 1% level; ** Significant at 5% level; * Significant at 10% level
Policy versus Reality

**Government Policy:**
- All schools to have hygienic latrines with handwashing facilities
- Hygiene and handwashing are taught at an early age

Survey of all 3,119 primary schools in 4 provinces
Students attending school with:
- Hygienic latrines => 85%
- Handwashing place => 73%
- HW place & soap usually available => 16%

Taking into account schools where soap is sometimes available, we estimate that about 10% of all primary school children wash their hands with soap after visits to the school latrines
Lessons & Recommendations to Government

- Budget to ensure consistent availability of soap and water is essential.
- The handwashing place must be close to the latrine and convenient for kids to practice handwashing.
- A second handwashing place can be placed at the main school building to encourage the children to wash hands after playing in the dirt, etc.
- There should be a roof over the handwashing place.
- Nudges have a significant impact on handwashing and should be used at all schools.
Agenda for Future Research

- Does a habit created at school carry over to other settings (e.g. at home)?
- Assess the impact of nudges on older school children
- Repeat in other cultural and socio-economic settings (countries, urban/rural, high/low income)
- Examine what type of nudges are most effective
- Expand the number of schools in each treatment group
- Find a permanent solution for Nudge painting (especially on the foot path) to keep the Nudge effect.
Thank You
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References:

