Realize an inclusive "Tippy Tap"

(COVID-19 response)

Suggestions and recommendations for HI's field programs

What is a "Tippy Tap"?

A tippy tap is a simple hand washing device that can be realized at community or household level with very few components, easy to find and to assemble by anyone.

How is a tippy tap made?

- STRUCTURE: 2 vertical supports stuck in the ground + 1 horizontal support attached at a convenient height;

Erika Trabucco | e.trabucco@hi.org Sarah Hermon-Duc | s.hermon-duc@hi.org

- DRAINAGE: 1 drainage pit 50cm deep, filled with large gravel or stones;


- WATER CONTAINER: 1 jerry can or similar closed container with cap, attached to the horizontal support of the structure with a rope or a chord; a hole is created on the side to let the water flow.

- HAND WASHING: 1 soap bar, attached to the horizontal support of the structure with a rope or a chord;

- LEVER-TYPE FOOT ACTIVATED MECHANISM: 1 lever bar (wood, metal, brick, etc.) suspended to the top of the water container by a rope or a chord.


Erika Trabucco | e.trabucco@hi.org Sarah Hermon-Duc | s.hermon-duc@hi.org

How does a tippy tap work?

When a person steps on the lever-type foot-activated bar, the water container leans forward and the water flows through the hole drilled on the container's side. The person can use the attached soap bar to wash his/her hands, and the spilled water is drained through the drainage pit dug in the ground underneath the water container. Once the foot is removed from the lever bar, the water container gets back to its original position and the water stops flowing.

Main accessibility problems

Tippy taps are often realized directly on the ground, in the middle of an open space, and frequently they are difficult to reach and use by persons with mobility impairments: the soil close to them and underneath the water container can be muddy, uneven, sandy, difficult to be walked on by persons with crutches or on a wheelchair, for example;


The activating mechanism is generally a foot-operated lever on the ground, which by its nature requires a foot to be activated;


Handwashing with a soap bar can be difficult for persons with an amputation or with grasping difficulties;

Erika Trabucco | e.trabucco@hi.org Sarah Hermon-Duc | s.hermon-duc@hi.org

Water containers can be difficult to see for persons with visual impairments; also the hole drilled on the side of the container and through which the water flows can be invisible, so making it difficult to put the hands in the right position.

Especially for community tippy taps, the location of the device should be clearly visible to everyone, and its purpose as well.

Some accessibility TIPS

REACH

- Make sure there is an accessible path to get to the tippy tap, and that the floor underneath the water container is accessible too (especially for persons using mobility aids):
    - Flat (max acceptable slope: 5-8%)
    - Even (realized in compressed marram, concrete, wood or other stable similar material; not in gravel, muddy soil, sand, grass, etc.)
    - Regular (with no obstacles like rocks, holes, grids, branches, etc.)
    - Large (at least 90cm, preferably 120-150 cm)
    - Anti-slip (no slippery tiles)
    - Possibly with one handrail at least on one side of the tippy tap (to support persons with balance difficulties)
    - Signposted (location clearly identified with direction arrows; panel close to the tippy tap to indicate its position and function)
    - Also, if possible the path to the tippy tap and the area around it should be marked with a raised border

USE

- Components in colors contrasting with the background (wooden structure, jerry can/ water container, soap holder, wood pedal, etc.)
- Water hole clearly identified (i.e. circled in a contrasted color)
- Alternative hand-operated activation system (not only a foot-operated one, in order to facilitate the use for persons using a wheelchair, persons with one amputated leg, etc.)
- Drainage pit underneath the jerry can/ water container clearly identified
- Convenient height of the jerry can / water container: 80-100 cm from the ground

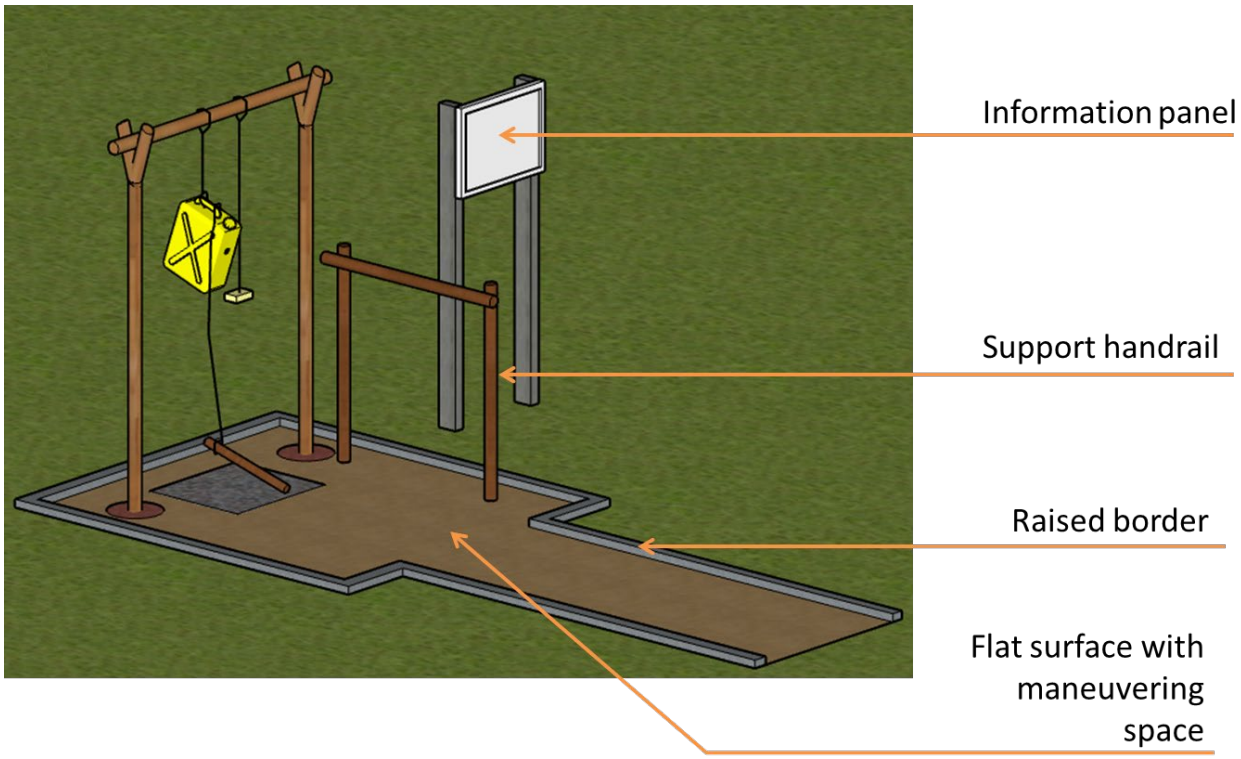

Figure 1 Improved tippy tap

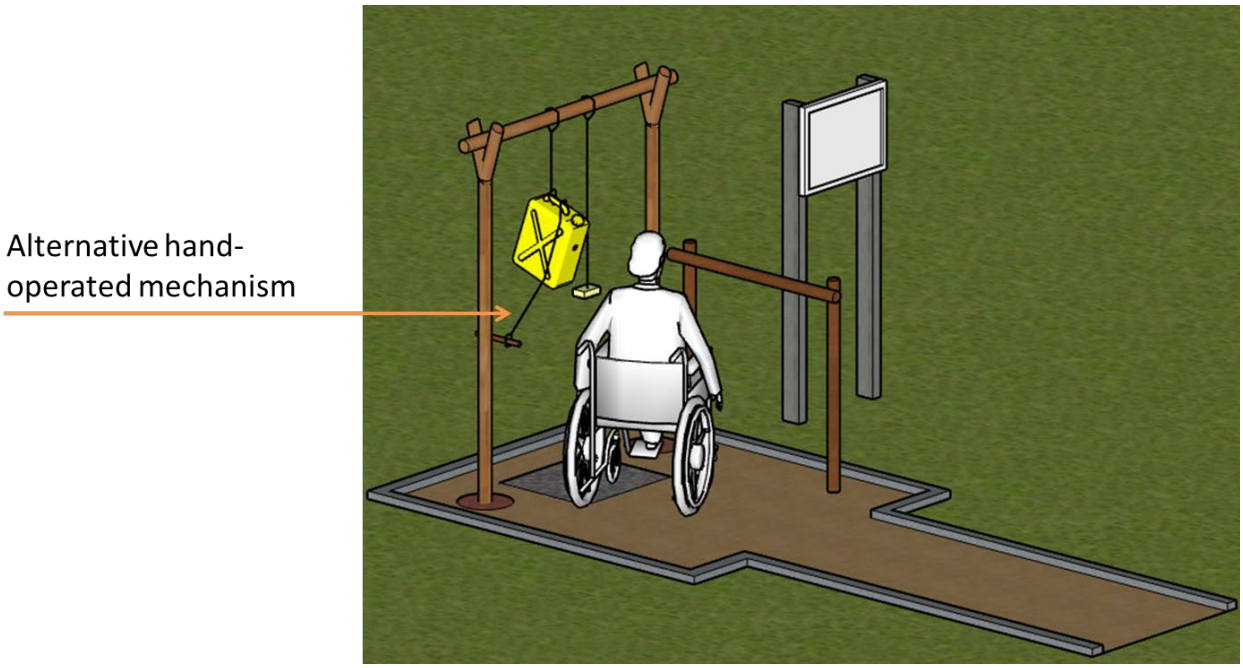

Figure 2 Improved tippy tap for persons using a wheelchair

Erika Trabucco | e.trabucco@hi.org Sarah Hermon-Duc | s.hermon-duc@hi.org

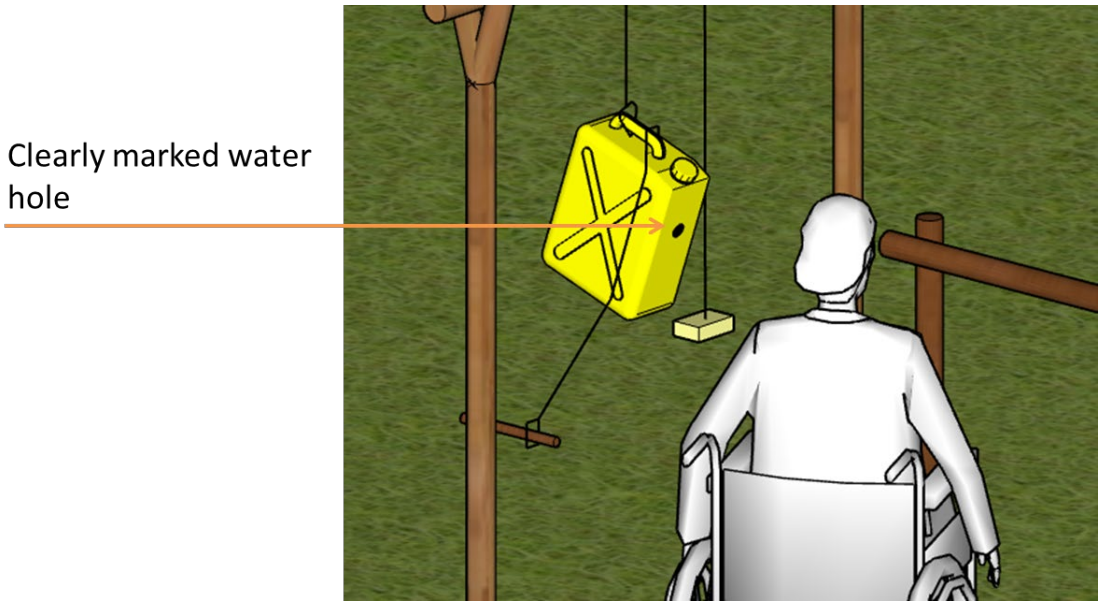

Figure 3 Detail of suggested hand-driven activation mechanism

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