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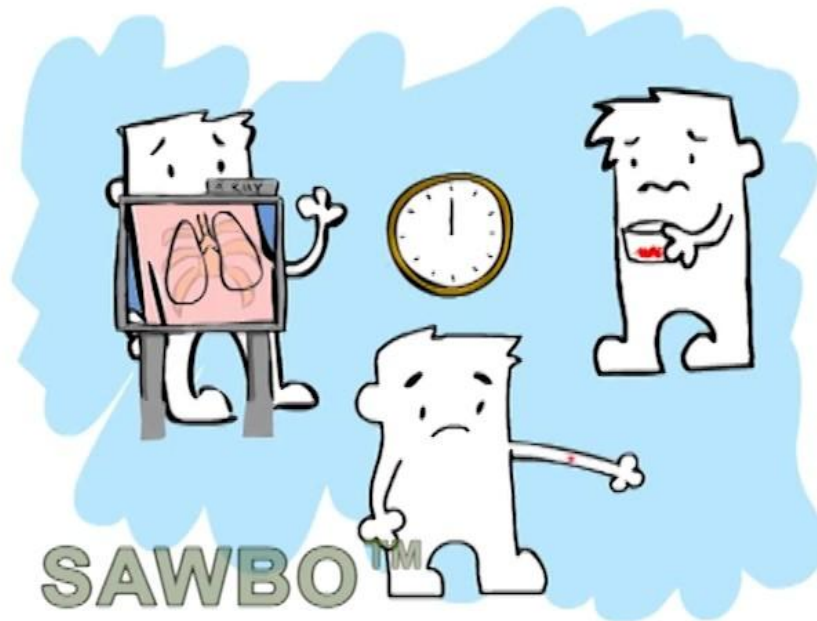
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Free animations spread lifesaving tips via smartphones

BY DANIEL GAITAN



A screenshot of a SAWBO tuberculosis education video is seen in this undated handout. REUTERS/SAWBO/HANDOUT

(Reuters Health) – Impoverished communities across the globe are receiving lifesaving tips for dealing with disease, draught and depression from short, user-friendly videos that are free online.

Agriculture animations, for example, show how to build raised planting beds using layers of animal manure, vegetation and soil, or how to install drip irrigation systems to help conserve water.

Health videos cover topics such as washing hands, using malaria-preventing bed nets, preventing tuberculosis and removing poison from Cassava flour.

Women's Empowerment videos address topics such as how to apply for a loan or hold a meeting.

The free videos – more than 40 at this point - are produced by Scientific Animations Without Borders, or SAWBO (bit.ly/1ff4sqK), which was founded in 2011 by Barry Pittendrigh and Julia Bello-Bravo of the University of Illinois at Urbana Champagne.

The narrated animations are available in more than 50 languages.

SAWBO works with experts from around the world “on topics that are important for low-

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literate learners in developing nations,” Pittendrigh told Reuters Health. “All materials are given out freely, so any individual, group or organization can integrate them into their educational programs.”

Pittendrigh estimates their animations have been viewed millions of times. SAWBO's YouTube channel is here: www.youtube.com/user/SAWBOSm.

“You can download and put them on cellphones, and you can then transmit them to other cellphones via Bluetooth,” Pittendrigh said. The videos can also be downloaded onto computers as .MP4, .MOV, or .F4V files.

Technological advances have made it more economical to create animations. The most difficult part is keeping them simple and easy-to-understand, said production manager Benjamin Blalock.

“We have to take a step back and talk to a lot of collaborators that come from a variety of backgrounds to help information become more understandable. . . We try to avoid scientific terms and numbers,” Blalock told Reuters Health.

Carl Burkybile, agricultural director of Healing Hands International, a faith-based, humanitarian nonprofit that teaches "survival gardening," began working with SAWBO last year.

“What we teach is very simple, but it's life changing and even lifesaving,” Burkybile told Reuters Health. “We're always looking for ways to reach new people. The videos are exciting because illiterate farmers can learn how to do these things.”



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