

LESSON 2

Water and Sanitation for All: Bringing the Issue Home

A Middle School Unit (Grades 6–8)

CLEAN WATER, GOOD SANITATION — A RECIPE FOR HEALTH

TOTAL TIME: 45 MINUTES

Objectives

Students will:

- Become aware of the human, economic, and environmental risks of unclean water and inadequate sanitation.
- Discuss how simple steps such as hand washing and water treatment can dramatically decrease disease.

Materials Needed/Setup

- Handouts #2A, “Real Lives: Nicaragua,” and #2B, “Real Lives: Angola” (from Lesson 1)
- Handout #3, “Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene: I Didn’t Know That!”
- Handouts #4A, “Mozambique: Children Lead the Way”
- Handouts #4B, “Indonesia: Water and Sanitation and the ‘Little Doctors’”

Directions

1. **(5 minutes)** Ask students to share their homework with a classmate who read a different case study. Call on a few students to share a question or a point they heard from their partner that they thought was particularly important and to explain why they thought it was important.
2. **(15 minutes)** Refer students to María’s and Fatima’s stories. Ask the class to name some consequences that can come from drinking unclean water or not having sanitation facilities: a consequence for an individual, a consequence for the economy of a country, and a consequence for the environment. Then divide the class into pairs and instruct them to develop their own

Students can pool their answers to create a “consequence chart” of all the individual, economic, and environmental results they have listed. The chart might also be used as the basis for further research projects.

- lists. Encourage them to include an individual, economic, and environmental consequence. Students can refer to the texts and/or background knowledge for ideas. Ask a few pairs to read their lists aloud. Encourage students to discuss the lists, and ask any questions they may have.
3. **(10 minutes)** Tell students that these are very complex problems, and it might surprise them that there are some very simple strategies that really help. Write on the board the following: *soap, sari, students*. Ask students for ideas about how these three things can be important factors in addressing the problems brought by unclean water and inadequate sanitation.
 4. **(15 minutes)** Distribute Handout #3, “Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene: I Didn’t Know That!” If necessary, clarify unfamiliar vocabulary words for students. Discuss each strategy and what makes it powerful. Do they know any other complicated problems that can often have simple solutions?
 5. **Homework (2 parts):**
 - a. Distribute handouts #4A to half the class and #4B to the other half. Explain to the students they are going to read about young people who are taking action in their communities. Have the students locate key action points in their story which allowed the youth to make a difference in their community.
 - b. Explain that the second part of their homework is to locate an article (on-line or print) which highlights youth taking action on water and/or sanitation issues in the United States. If students do not have access to the Internet, print a few examples for distribution. Some possible website and/or news sources might be:
 - Chesapeake Bay Foundation: <http://www.cbf.org/Page.aspx?pid=1000>
 - National Public Radio: <http://www.npr.org/>
 - National Science Foundation: <http://www.nsf.gov/>
 - PBS News Hour: <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/>
 - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: <http://www.epa.gov/>
 - U.S. Geological Survey: <http://www.usgs.gov/>

Note: The continuation of this homework assignment is included in Lesson 3, as an introductory lesson.

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene: I Didn't Know That!

Soap...

“Turning handwashing with soap before eating and after using the toilet into an ingrained habit could save more lives than any single vaccine or medical intervention, cutting deaths from diarrhea by almost half and deaths from acute respiratory infections by one-quarter.”

http://globalhandwashingday.org/Global_Handwashing_Day_2nd_Edition.pdf and WELL Fact Sheet at <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/well/resources/fact-sheets/factsheets-htm/Handwashing.htm>

Saris...

“Forcing water through a **simple filter made from the cloth of old saris can reduce cholera cases by about half**, according to a study of rural villages in Bangladesh. When people drink unfiltered water ... it introduce[s] bacteria into their systems that causes extreme diarrhea and cramping. Without treatment, cholera kills 50 to 80 percent of those infected.”

“Old Sari Cloth Filters Cholera, Study Finds”
New York Times: January 14, 2003

Students...

“Our experience at UNICEF reveals that **children are the best change agents at both home and in the community**. We believe that if we target the children, they will in turn bring change in the family and thereby the entire community.”

Mrs. Sukanya Subramanian, Assistant Project Officer of Education, UNICEF

Mozambique: Children Lead the Way*

In Mozambique, young people are transforming dark and dirty schools into healthy, inviting places of learning. Children as young as 7 are educating their peers, their families, and their communities about the importance of safe water, good hygiene, and private, separate sanitation facilities.

In 2000, a UNICEF study found that 80% of all primary schools here had no toilets for boys or girls and no hand-washing facilities. To address this situation, UNICEF supported the construction of latrines and hand-washing facilities for boys, girls, and teachers. But the most powerful tools in improving the school and community environment were the children themselves.

UNICEF trained 17- to 24-year-olds to bring the message about improving their schools and communities to primary school students. Child-to-child sanitation clubs sprang up in 15 primary schools. These clubs promoted hygiene practices and healthy school environments. The young people also pushed for central refuse collection spots so that they no longer had to share their play spaces with garbage.

Flávo Varela de Araújo, 14, is an active member of a child-to-child radio program that supports the school sanitation clubs. "With the creation of the club, the school environment is changing," says Flávo. "The students' behavior is changing, too."

Also, parents are listening to their children. They are practicing hygienic behavior at home. They have begun asking local authorities to provide better hygiene education and services in all schools.

These initiatives have also encouraged girls' education. Older girls used to drop out of school for lack of privacy. They are now remaining in school to complete their basic schooling. The improved hygienic conditions have given girls back their books and their dignity.

*Source: UNICEF http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/index_2231.html

Indonesia: Water and Sanitation and the “Little Doctors”*



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Mothers in Indonesia beam with pride as they watch their children performing in the primary school play. But the mothers are more than entertained by the young actors; they are also learning valuable lessons about the importance of boiling water, washing their hands before preparing food or eating, and disposing of refuse properly.

The actors are members of “Little Doctors,” a primary school project funded by the government of New Zealand and supported by UNICEF. This school club, consisting of

30 students from grades 4 to 6, promotes hygiene through community theater and other activities.

The discussion about water, sanitation, and health continues long after the play’s final curtain. The children bring the lessons home. The mothers say that they are getting the message and are changing their hygiene behavior.

The students’ work of improving the health of their community goes beyond their theater productions. They also take charge of the village’s “Clean Friday,” a national movement that encourages hygiene promotion. When the “Little Doctors” club began in 1998, it improved the community’s sanitary environment by upgrading drains, clearing debris, and working on a school herb garden.

The Little Doctors are becoming leaders, learning to communicate clearly and effectively, problem-solve, negotiate, and analyze. As future mothers and fathers, they are also ensuring hygienic environments and better health for tomorrow’s generation. But the benefits are already happening today.

“With a clean environment people don’t become ill,” says 13-year-old Zarkasi. “So our concentration for studying isn’t disturbed and we learn better in school.”

*Source: UNICEF http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/index_2103.html