



Environment

Water Community



Education Community

Solution Exchange for the Water Community
Solution Exchange for the Education Community

Consolidated Reply

Query: Role of Children in Spreading Water and Sanitation Awareness - Experiences

Compiled by Pankaj Kumar S. and Amit Kaushik, Resource Persons and Ramya Gopalan and Sagarika Gnanolivu, Research Associates
14 May 2007

From Gyanendra Mishra, UDAAN, Aligarh

Posted 19 April 2007

Dear Sir/Madam,

I work for an NGO called UDAAN in Aligarh and neighbouring districts. We provide training to Gram Pradhans, motivators, village functionaries and other stakeholders on water and sanitation issues. We also support the Government in the Total Sanitation Campaign in mobilising the community for construction of low cost leach pit toilets at village level. Additionally, we implement force lift handpumps in schools to lift and store water without motor and electricity. This has made many school toilets usable, which had become defunct due to non-availability of water.

During the course of our work, we found that children are harbingers of technology promotion. If we are able to teach children about water and sanitation, the message can be disseminated very effectively to the whole community.

In this context, we request community members to share their views on the following:

- Experiences and tools used for sensitising children in appropriate sanitation behaviour such as hand-washing, use of toilets, safe disposal of waste, etc.
 - Problems faced and innovative methods used by members for spreading awareness about safe drinking water and sanitation through students and children to larger communities.
 - Things to keep in mind while designing a children/ student based IEC programme on safe drinking water and sanitation.
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Responses were received, with thanks, from:

1. [Ajit Seshadri](#), The Vigyan Vijay Foundation, New Delhi
2. M.V. Ananthakrishnan, Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai ([Response 1](#); [Response 2](#))
3. [Meeta Jaruhar](#), Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Jharkhand
4. [S. Vishwanath](#), Rainwater Club & Arghyam Trust, Bangalore
5. Jyotsna Bapat, Independent Consultant, New Delhi ([Response 1](#); [Response 2](#))
6. [Rukmini Banerji](#), Pratham India, New Delhi
7. [D.K. Mohanty](#), Jyotirmayee Mahila Samiti, Kendrapara, Orissa
8. [Nandini Roy](#), National Institute of Medical Statistics, ICMR, New Delhi
9. [Chandreyee Das](#), INSPIRATION, Kolkata
10. Mrinalinee Vanarase, IORA for Environmental Solutions, Pune ([Response 1](#); [Response 2](#))
11. [Sushant Kumar Singh](#), UNICEF, Patna
12. [Pramel and Anju Gupta](#), Independent Consultants, Bhopal
13. [Archana Mehendale](#), Independent Researcher, Bangalore
14. [Surendra Kumar Yadav](#), National Institute of Health & Family Welfare, New Delhi
15. [B.M. Kandpal](#), Simar, Chamoli, Uttarakhand
16. [Seema Raghunathan](#), Natco Trust, Hyderabad
17. [Lima Rosalind](#), WWF-India, New Delhi
18. [Arunabha Majumder](#), All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, Kolkata
19. [R. Srikanth](#), WaterAid, New Delhi
20. [Pramel Gupta](#), Bhopal Rehabilitation, Bhopal
21. [Madhu Ranjan](#), USAID, New Delhi
22. [V.R. Raghavan](#), Oxfam GB, Kolkata
23. [Sweta Patnaik](#), WaterAid India, Bhubaneswar
24. [Megha Phansalkar](#), Water Supply and Sanitation Department, Navi Mumbai
25. [Shradha](#), DAV Public School, Shimla
26. [Anil Jaggi](#), SEWAA, Dehradun
27. [Depinder Kapur](#), WaterAid, New Delhi
28. [K.N. Vijayanthi](#), UNICEF, Chennai
29. [Kashinath Vajpai](#), TNS India, New Delhi
30. [Hemalatha Patil](#), WaterAid india, Bangalore

Further contributions are welcome!

Summary of Responses

What are the experiences, tools and techniques in involving children in spreading water and sanitation (watsan) awareness? In response to this query, members shared experiences on linking children in watsan related awareness programmes from various parts of India and suggested a wide variety of tools and techniques for the same.

Respondents unanimously accepted the crucial **importance of developing children's awareness** about watsan issues. This is because as children gain awareness from activities going around them in society, when suitably informed and motivated, they can also act as powerful agents for raising awareness of adults. Respondents stressed that love for their children and grandchildren can be a powerful motivating factor for bringing about behaviour change in adults. Being enthusiastic and energetic stakeholders, children also provide much needed energy to awareness programmes on

watsan. In the long run too, investing in raising children's awareness also makes sense, as they will form better-informed citizens in future, felt discussants.

Experiences shared by members also suggest that children have less psychological barriers in accepting new concepts and technologies and discussing normally taboo issues in a free and progressive manner. A project which introduced a new type of eco-sanitation toilet in a small town in [Karnataka](#) experienced clearly that not only were children able to grasp the relevance and linkages of the new method, but were also able to motivate their parents in using the urine collected for fertilizer use. Another programme supported by UNICEF in Kolkata, [West Bengal](#) used simple communication tools like "bindi boards" to create a healthy competition among school children and their households. This helped them to track and follow safe watsan behaviour through trainings and creating peer-groups of children and their parents. Respondents also related how a project in [Andhra Pradesh](#) devised teacher to child, child to child and child to parent paths for transmission of messages in Total Sanitation Campaign, and used local folk media to engage children's interest in a palatable manner.

The group shared a wide variety of **tools and techniques for sensitizing children**. A programme by USAID used a [multipronged approach](#) to enhance children's awareness:

- Watsan focused teach and learn material (TLMs)
- School camps on watsan, constructing soak and compost pits, making Oral Rehydration Salt
- System to track use of hygiene behaviour in village households
- Training to Village Education Committees and "neighbourhood leaders"
- Interesting books and material to convey watsan messages

Other **methods for involving children** that came up in the discussion included inclusion of hygiene and watsan in children's syllabus, especially in ensuring that their awareness is built in simple, interesting and fun ways. Members gave a list of [suggested topics](#) on which watsan awareness of children can be increased and underlined using small practical exercises for greater effectiveness. They specifically emphasized training children in using testing kits to assess and monitor the quality of water in water bodies near the schools, so that a continuous data generation could take place. Getting children to study history, ecology and interlinkages of water resources and rural life, and making them authors of the data collected would further enhance their interest. Additional tools that the group came up with were :

- Village and stream walks and informal discussions, and setting up seed banks
- Exposure visits to schools which are using safe behaviour
- Newsletters containing poems, slogans, puzzles, cartoons, short plays
- Children to script, perform role plays, puppetry, miming, one-act plays on safe behaviour
- Linking NSS camps, Eco-clubs with eco-messages to watsan
- Initiating school-community projects on watsan

Additionally, the discussion listed some **innovative awareness methods** being used by programmes in various parts of India. Members related how a programme in [Mumbai](#) had developed interactive media and videos to teach children basics of watsan so that they can be sanitation messengers carrying the message forward to their families and communities. Another project in [Uttarakhand](#), inspired by the United Nations Convention on Rights of Children is training children to use various media to reach out to other children. A project in Pune is involving children in [stream restoration](#) for sustainability of water resources, while another agency in **New Delhi** has designed a [pictorial survey](#) for involving various stakeholders and has been carried out across the country. Respondents also mentioned the experience of a project in Bhubaneswar which organizes [Mock Parliaments](#) by children to discuss watsan issues. Under another programme called "[Chakmak](#)", the child who is the cleanest and most motivated on watsan in each class is chosen as a mascot for cleanliness for a certain period. Similarly, an organisation from Kendrapara builds "[Meena Clubs](#)" – clubs of girls from six to sixteen years - to act as a pressure group to get adults to adopt safe watsan behaviour. To further promote such experiments,

discussants underscored the need for intensive orientation, capacity building of teachers to enhance their motivation and awareness.

The discussion reaffirmed the query poser's belief in the crucial role of children in influencing the behaviour of adults in water and sanitation, and threw up a host of ideas and tools on how this can be done using various innovations. However, the success of such isolated experiments can be broad-based only if national and state governments incorporate these learnings into their programmes on drinking water and sanitation.

Comparative Experiences

Jharkhand

Convergence of Government Departments (from [Meeta Jaruhar](#), Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Jharkhand)

The state is converging activities under Departments of Drinking Water & Education to promote hygiene behaviour by children through a programme. The programme found children enthusiastic stakeholders and great influencers of the behaviour of their parents, teachers, etc. To sustain and promote hygiene the programme intends to conduct activities, orient teachers and members of village education committees, and integrate activities into school hygiene lessons.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Clubs (from [Sweta Patnaik](#), WaterAid India, Bhubaneswar)

Gram Jyoti, a partner of [WaterAid India](#) working in Deoghar district promotes water, sanitation and hygiene clubs in schools. It set up three clubs in each school with the help of hygiene educators and schoolteachers. The membership of these clubs is on a rotational basis so that the maximum numbers of children have a chance to be in these clubs. The children take their roles seriously and also helped percolate safe hygiene practices to parents and community.

Karnataka

Eco-Sanitation Source Separating Toilet in Schools, Dodballapur Town (from [S. Vishwanath](#), Rainwater Club & Arghyam Trust, Bangalore)

An eco-sanitation toilet was set up because Dodballapur faces acute water shortages. Children were explained the 'eco-toilet' concept and its usage in batches of 50. In a non-condescending manner, they encouraged the children to ask questions. The children came away with a good understanding of the need for eco-toilets and hygiene requirements after using it. The teachers were reluctant to maintain the toilets, so the children set up a maintenance committee to clean the toilets.

Social Mapping Exercise in Kundapur (from [Archana Mehendale](#), Independent Researcher, Bangalore)

[CWC](#) facilitated a social mapping exercise in 1991 and 1993, conducted by rural children. The children studied the history and local ecology surrounding the river Varahi to understand the linkages between the river and their rural life, specially its slow degradation. Their participation in the exercise helped the children learn about conservation of natural resources. Based on their learnings the children became involved in advocacy efforts in this area.

West Bengal

Child-Family-Community Approach on Sanitary Toilet Use in Raina II and Memari I Blocks (from [Chandreyee Das](#), INSPIRATION, Kolkata)

Primary schoolchildren were mobilised and motivated to change habits through interactive aids like a 'Bindi Board' where red and black bindis/stickers were used to indicate good and bad behaviour. The

initiative identified guardian representatives to conduct basic household surveys on toilet use, garbage disposal habits and drinking water source, involving parents in activities. Survey results demonstrated which neighbourhoods were most environmentally conscious.

Maharashtra

Participatory Ecological Restoration of Streams in Villages (from *Mrinalinee Vanarase, IORA for Environmental Solutions, Pune, [response 1](#); [response 2](#)*)

[NGA](#) involves children in ecological restoration activities by conducting village and stream walks, holding informal discussions and collecting data on the ecological history and present status of streams. Based on their study the children worked on stream restoration and were encouraged to monitor their streams through the year using a checklist. The children also helped set up seed banks (composed of seeds from consumed fruits) to then disburse seeds into the wilderness.

"Swachhata Doot" (Cleanliness Messengers) Approach to Hygiene Promotion (from *[Megha Phansalkar](#), Water Supply and Sanitation Department, Navi Mumbai*)

Initiated by the Water Supply and Sanitation Department this approach uses children as messengers to persuade people to practice clean and hygienic habits. The children go from house to house and instruct family members, about how they can maintain hygienic conditions by adopting simple habits like using soap, storing drinking water in high places, using ladles to scoop water, washing hands before meals and after using the toilet. Read [more](#)

Training to Teachers & Children (Swachhata Doot), Sangli Zilla Parishad (from *[Ramya Gopalan](#), Research Associate*)

In this scheme, one teacher from each school has given training on Sanitation Education with the help of UNICEF representatives. These teachers are trained to impart training to 50 students from each village. These trained students do the weekly door-to-door survey and report on sanitation habits of the people. So far, about 50000 children have undergone the training and disseminated to other children what sanitation is and the six messages of Sanitation.

Uttarakhand

'Umang' (Exuberance) Initiative (from *[B M Kandpal](#), Simar, Chamoli, Uttarakhand*)

Sri Bhuvaneswari Mahila Ashram (SBMA) through its 'Umang' initiative has established an innovative process that is taking child participation to higher levels by recognising them as a potential media resource– both regionally and nationally. This experiment has shown tremendous scope to sensitize children and adults on water and sanitation issues, so SBMA with Plan International is scaling it up in all 13 districts of Uttarakhand.

Andhra Pradesh

Total Sanitation Campaign Using 'Joyful' Methods to Improve Sanitation (from *[Seema Raghunathan](#), Natco Trust, Hyderabad*)

Natco Trust adopted approaches based on the 'Teacher to Child, Child to Child, Child to Parent' paths from the Total Sanitation Campaign in Mahboobnagar district and in Hyderabad slums. The Trust trained children on good and bad hygiene habits using joyful and playful methods like puppetry, miming and One Act plays. The initiative's impact was very good resulting in 'total sanitation' in project area.

Clean India theme in National Children's Science Congress (NCSC) (from *[V.R. Raghavan](#), Oxfam GB, Kolkata*)

Whilst a group of teachers promoted scientific temper and environmental awareness among school children, the GoI launched an innovative programme - NCSC, through National Council for Science and Technology. In 1995, the theme was Clean India. Students developed innovative ideas of clean water,

hygiene promotion, and solid waste management and were supported by NGOs to develop projects like vermi composting, fisheries in urban sewage treatment, puppetry to communicate about diseases etc.

Orissa

From [Sweta Patnaik](#), *WaterAid India, Bhubaneswar*

Street Children Debate Water and Sanitation Scenario

WaterAid's partner Ruchika Social Service Organisation (RSSO) runs special schools for street children promoting Child Parliaments that debate Orissa's water and sanitation scenario. The children dress up as Members of Parliament/Legislative Assembly and enact a mock of the parliament in progress. RSSO provides information to these children and they raise questions and answers on drinking water and sanitation facilities and provisions made by the Government.

Meena Clubs of Child Environment Programme (CEP) in Kendrapara district

Under [UNICEF's CEP](#) Nature's Club, with support from the district administration and Water and Sanitation Mission, promoted MEENA Clubs in two blocks. The clubs consisting of girls ages six to sixteen inspired by MEENA films tried to change the watsan situation in their villages. The clubs acted as pressure groups to motivate and urge families and communities to construct and use toilets in homes and repair/maintain drinking water sources and community bathrooms.

Children Using Participatory Analysis (PA) in Flood Prone Areas (from [V.R. Raghavan](#), *Oxfam GB, Kolkata*)

While working with school children in promotion of water and sanitation in flood prone areas, contextual PA in the school and village was used. Children analysed water and sanitation scenarios at their homes, neighbourhood, community and school level. After identifying the problems, they developed a dream plan for their village and school, identifying processes to achieve them. Thus, an activity plan is developed, integrated with TSC in few schools and gaps are supported by Oxfam and partners.

Multiple States

PAHELI (Peoples Audit of Health, Education and Livelihoods) Survey Engages Participants (from [Rukmini Banerji](#), *Pratham India, New Delhi*)

[Pratham](#) recently undertook a pictorial watsan survey. In each district, a local group collected data from a random sample of households- 30 villages/district in 11 districts across the country. The PAHELI survey was designed along the principles of the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), and is facilitated annually across the country by over 600 district partners. Use of this pictorial survey approach has enabled participants to become more engaged in watsan activities.

SWASTHH+ Program (from [Madhu Ranjan](#), *USAID, New Delhi*)

Aims at improving the school environment with a focus on hygiene and sanitation so as to also improve children's enrolment, attendance and retention, especially for girls, and eventually, improvement in learning. Multi-pronged approaches were undertaken by USAID such as training/teach and learn materials in curriculum/learning camps etc are used to bring change in the hygiene behaviour of school children and through them, the communities. Gradual but visible change has been observed. Read [more](#)

Chakmak Champion Program (from [Sweta Patnaik](#), *WaterAid India, Bhubaneswar*)

This program is part of WaterAid India's nationwide hand washing campaign. Some of the partner schools select a "Chakmak" every month from each class- who is the "cleanest" child following correct hand-washing practices, uses a toilet at home and school, uses footwear, etc. and most importantly, motivates others to do so.

Related Resources

Recommended Organizations

Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay, Mumbai (from *M V Ananthakrishnan, Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai, [response 1](#); [response 2](#)*)

Powai, Mumbai – 400076; Tel.: +91-22-2572-2545; Fax: +91-22-2572-3480

<http://www.iitb.ac.in/projects.html>

Developed an interactive multimedia for nomadic children, which teaches the three R's – reuse/reduce/recycle, and sensitises them towards clean water and personal hygiene

The Concerned for Working Children (CWC), India, Bangalore (from *[Archana Mehendale](#), Independent Researcher, Bangalore*)

303/2, L B Shastri Nagar Vimanapura Post, Bangalore – 560017; Tel.: +91-80-25234611; Fax: +91-8025235034; cwc@pobox.com; <http://www.workingchild.org/>

For details on CWC's facilitation of a social mapping exercise that was conducted by rural children in Kundapur, Dakshina Kannada on the local ecology surrounding River Virahi

Community Led Environment Action Network (CLEAN-India) (from *[V.R. Raghavan](#), Oxfam GB, Kolkata and [Anil Jaggi](#), SEWAA, Dehradun*)

CLEAN-India Programme, Development Alternatives, B-32, Tara Crescent, Outab Institutional Area, New Delhi – 110016; Tel.: 91-11-26134103/26890380; Fax: 91-11-26130817; cleanindia@devalt.org;

<http://www.cleanindia.org/>

A student-centric environment assessment/awareness/advocacy and action programme run by Development Alternatives since 1996 in 72 cities through 6 schools from each city.

Pratham India Education Initiative (PIEI), New Delhi (from *[Rukmini Banerji](#)*)

38 A, 2nd Floor, West Laxmi Market, Patparganj Road, Khureji, Delhi-110092; Tel.: +91-11-24308339; info@pratham.org;

<http://www.pratham.org/knowus/initiative/india.php>

Recommended for developing the PAHELI Pictorial survey of watsan in the country which has enabled greater engagement of individuals including children in the sector

From *[Sweta Patnaik](#), WaterAid India, Bhubaneswar*

WaterAid India (WAI), New Delhi India Country office, 25, Navjivan Vihar, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi-110017; Tel.: +91-11-26692206

Click [here](#) to view link

Organization is recommended for the research and action undertaken on educating and involving children in spreading awareness on water and sanitation

UNICEF's Child Environment Programme, New Delhi

73 Lodi Estate, New Delhi- 110 003, Tel.: +91-11-24690401/24691410; Fax: +91-11-24627521/24691410; newdelhi@unicef.org; <http://www.unicef.org/india/wes.html>

Ensures safe drinking water, good hygiene practices and access to effective sanitation for children and also involves children to improve watsan situation through "Meena Clubs"

School Sanitation and Hygiene Education (SSHE) (from *[Meeta Jaruhar](#), Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Jharkhand*)

Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC), Department of Drinking Water Supply (DDWS), Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD); 2004; <http://ddws.nic.in/sshe/html/index.html>

Programme to ensure child friendly water supply, toilet and hand washing facilities in the schools and promote behavioral change by hygiene education.

Nirmal Gram Puraskar (from [Megha Phansalkar](#), Water Supply and Sanitation Department, Navi Mumbai)

<http://ddws.nic.in/tsc-nic/html/ngp1.htm>

This scheme was initiated as an incentive for fully sanitized and open defecation free Gram Panchayats, Blocks, and Districts and it is based largely on population criteria

School Water and Sanitation Towards Health and Hygiene (SWASTHH) Program (from [Madhu Ranjan](#), USAID, New Delhi)

Janshala, Community Based Primary Education, GoI, UN System, April – June 2002

<http://www.un.org.in/janshala/apriljune2002/swasthh.htm>

As one in the series of innovations by the Janshala Programme adopting a A teacher-to-child and child-to-parent approach to health and sanitation in Karnataka

From [Ramya Gopalan](#), Research Associate

The Green Schools Programme

Environment Education Unit, Centre for Science and Environment (CSE)

http://www.cseindia.org/programme/eeu/gsp/gsp_index.htm

Envisages self-assessment of the environmental practices of the school by its students using the [Green Schools Manual](#) on the use and management of resources – water and waste

The Child Friendly Cities Initiative

International Secretariat for Child Friendly Cities, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Piazza SS.

Annunziata, 12 50122 Florence, Italy; Tel.: +39 05520330; Fax: +39 0552033220;

florencecfccsecr@unicef.org; Click [here](#) to view link

Initiative aims at getting the voices, needs, priorities and rights of children to be an integral part of public policies, programmes and decisions while creating cities

EduGreen Programme

Contact: Livleen Kahlon, Environmental Education and Awareness, TERI; Tel.: 2468 2100/ 2468 2111;

Fax: 2468 2144/ 2468 2145; eea@teri.res.in

<http://edugreen.teri.res.in/>

The Programme aims at making environmental learning fun for the young and targets senior school and undergraduate students from schools and colleges in India

From [Sagarika Gnanaolivu](#), Research Associate

Project WET- Water Education for Teachers

1001 West Oak; Suite 210; Bozeman; MT 59715 U.S.A; (406) 585-2236; info@projectwet.org;

<http://www.projectwet.org/>

Project WET reaches out to children, parents, educators, and communities of the world through innovative curriculum and workshops on water.

Water Supply & Sanitation and Collaborative Council

International Environment House; 9 Chemin des Anémones; 1219 Châtelaine, Geneva; Tel: +41(0)

22917 8657; wsc@who.int; <http://www.wsscc.org/>

The Council seeks to accelerate the achievement of sustainable sanitation, hygiene and water services to all people including children around the world.

Recommended Documentation

From M V Ananthkrishnan, Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai ([Response 1](#); [Response 2](#))

From "Real" To "Media" Anchors: Experiments with Anchored Instruction of Nomadic Children

Dr. M V Ananthakrishnan & Professor Krithi Ramamritham, Kanwal Rekhi School of Information Technology, Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, Mumbai

<http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/environment/cr/res20040701.pdf> (Size: 477 KB)

Studies three tribes in Maharashtra over a four month period, evaluating resources and methods that could be used successfully in sustained education of the children on watsan

Educating nomadic children: An experiment with the Convergence of Technologies

Dr. M V Ananthakrishnan, Senior Member, IEEE

<http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/environment/cr/res20040702.pdf> (Size: 917 KB)

Reports on an experiment with nomadic tribes on the convergence of tradition and ICT, involving use of technologies to motivate children and mothers particularly in watsan

From Mrinalinee Vanarase, IORA for Environmental Solutions, Pune, [Response 1](#); [Response 2](#))

Images of Students' involvement in Stream Regeneration – Nirmal Ganga Abhiyan (NGA)

IORA for Environmental Solutions, Pune

<http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/environment/cr/res27040701.doc> (Size: KB)

A photo documentation of the Nirmal Ganga Abhiyan involving children to undertake local stream restoration efforts

Checklist for data collection – restoration of streams

Nirmal Ganga Abhiyan (NGA), IORA for Environmental Solutions, Pune

<http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/environment/cr/res19040701.doc> (Size: 42 KB)

Students, youngsters & village people can use the above checklist, developed by the NGA to record observations that will help them in eco-restoration of local streams

Rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (from [B M Kandpal](#), Simar, Chamoli, Uttarakhand)

http://www.unicef.org/crc/index_30177.html

Incorporates the entire range of international human rights, and provides basis to involve children in efforts to provide safe drinking water and nurture safe hygiene/habits

Water Conservation (from [Shradha](#), DAV Public School, Shimla)

Edugreen, TERI, 2006

<http://edugreen.teri.res.in/explore/water/conser.htm>

Provides information on water conservation techniques with the aim of facilitating environmental learning for the youth as part of TERI's Edugreen Campaign

School Sanitation Plan (from [V.R. Raghavan](#), Oxfam GB, Kolkata)

<http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/environment/cr/res03050701.pdf> (Size: 2 MB)

Contains a school level sanitation plan with a self explanatory map developed by children, currently in Oriya language, soon to be translated in English

From [Ramya Gopalan](#), Research Associate

Interactive Game: Water Alert

http://www.unicef.org/voy/explore/wes/explore_1818.html

An interactive game for youth that explores real life situations with regard to water, environment and sanitation.

Youth Interventions

<http://www.sayen.org/youth%20and%20wash/youth.pdf> (Size: 73.45 KB)

Provides examples of several water, sanitation and hygiene projects emphasizing the role of school children and their greater involvement in reaching a wider community.

Community Driven Approach in Rural Development

Government of Maharashtra

<http://www.mahawssd.gov.in/HomeImage/CommunityApproach.pdf> (Size: 712 KB)

For information on rural water and sanitation reforms particularly on involving school children in sanitation survey as 'Swachhata Doot' (Volunteers for Sanitation)

The Green Schools Programme Manual

CSE Store (paid publication)

http://csestore.cse.org.in/store1.asp?sec_id=1&subsec_id=18

A self learning and assessment tool so that teachers can work with students to audit their use of natural resources and to experiment with environment friendly practices.

From [Sagarika Gnanaolivu](#), Research Associate

School Sanitation and Hygiene Education in India: Investment in Building Children's Future

By Government of India; SSHE Global Symposium "Construction is Not Enough" Delft; The Netherlands 8-10 June, 2004; http://ddws.nic.in/SSHE_in_India_Paper_2004.pdf (Size: 475KB)

The document details the evolution, goals and achievements of the School Sanitation and Hygiene Education (SSHE) which is imperative for school centric development.

Life Skills based Hygiene Education

By IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre, 2004

http://www.irc.nl/content/download/11504/168690/file/life_skills.pdf (Size: 737 KB)

This document contains an overview of life skills-based education and the development of life skills-based hygiene education material for school sanitation and hygiene programmes.

Progress for Children: A report card on water and sanitation (No. 5)

By UNICEF, September 2006

http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Progress_for_Children_No._5_-_English.pdf (Size: 1.23 MB)

This issue reports on whether the world is on course to reach MDG 7, which is of vital relevance for children.

Recommended Portals and Information Bases

From [Ramya Gopalan](#), Research Associate

Water, Environment and Sanitation, Voices of Youth, UNICEF

http://www.unicef.org/voy/explore/wes/explore_wes.php

Offers all children and adolescents, including the hard-to-reach, a safe and supportive global cyberspace within which they can explore, discuss and lead on watsan issues

Gobar Times, Centre for Science and Environment (CSE)

http://www.gobartimes.org/20070331/green_school.asp

Monthly magazine (also available digitally), provides information on environmental issues for children/youth aimed at creating awareness and facilitating learning at an early age

International Water and Sanitation Centre (IRC) (from [Sagarika Gnanaolivu](#), Research Associate)

<http://www.irc.nl/page/114>

The website details publications, case studies, projects on school sanitation and hygiene education.

Related Past Consolidated Replies

**[Sanitation Programme for Anganwadi Centres](#), from Meeta Jaruhar, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Jharkhand (Experiences). (Size: 105 KB). Issued 21 September 2006
*Provides inputs for designing child friendly toilets for Anganwadi Centres (AWCs), experiences in evolving toilet designs, plan parameters and some designs developed in parts of the country.***

[Status of Environment Education in the School Curriculum](#), from Livleen Kahlon, TERI, New Delhi (Experiences). (Size: 227 KB). Issued 28 February 2007.
Provides experiences, difficulties encountered when integrating EE as a subject, and offers suggestions to make EE a more joyful, inclusive and meaningful learning experience for children

Responses in Full

[Ajit Seshadri](#), The Vigyan Vijay Foundation, New Delhi

This is indeed a very interesting subject.

We know that children's awareness is being raised when many contemporary issues are being discussed and raised in our society. In turn, children take up the role of spreading awareness in society and seek the participation of their role models – both in rural or urban communities.

We intend involving children in designing and spreading awareness of youth innovators in various environmental issues, in which many schools and institutions can also be associated. For example, NSS programs in colleges can be linked with eco-messages. Eco-club schools in Delhi can spread ecological and water literacy, and so on. All these interventions can have persistent and positive results for upgrading the environment. We have had some positive experiences with institutions and programmes in involving youth for increasing outreach.

[M V Ananthkrishnan](#), Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai (*response 1*)

At IIT Bombay, I am leading a couple of projects in using ICT for education and development of children of nomadic tribes. In the process we have developed videos and interactive programmes on clean water, cleanliness and physical hygiene.

We could possibly share our ideas in a common forum and share the work that we have carried out.

I am attaching a few of our publications to let you know what we are doing. These are available at the following links :

<http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/environment/cr/res20040701.pdf> (Size: 477 KB)

<http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/environment/cr/res20040702.pdf> (Size: 917 KB)

[Meeta Jaruhar](#), Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Jharkhand

The experience shared by Gyanendra Mishra on interventions with children is indeed interesting. In Total Sanitation Campaign, school sanitation and hygiene education (SSHE) is one of the acknowledged components.

In Jharkhand, the state is synergizing the convergence of the Dept. of Drinking Water and the Dept. of Education to reach children with hygiene promoting behaviour. It has been experienced that children are very enthusiastic stakeholders of the program and are also great influencers of the behaviour of their parents, teachers etc. Therefore, to sustain and promote hygiene behaviour it is important that along with children, some mobilization activities and orientation of teachers and community members of the village education committee be planned. There is also a need to integrate the syllabus of the schools with hygiene lessons, which should be taught in such a way that it relates to day to day situations. For example, the chapter on fruits and vegetables could also emphasize the need to wash and handle these hygienically.

Similarly, some simple illustrations were used. In class, a student was shown a glass full of water and then was asked to wash his hand with soap/ fresh ash. This [wash] water was collected in another glass. He was made to compare dirt in the two glasses. This kind of methodology was interesting and left a mark on children.

S. Vishwanath, Rainwater Club & Arghyam Trust, Bangalore

On the very important question you have raised, here is an experience from Dodballapur Town, 30 km from Bangalore.

A partnership lead by an NGO Mythri Sarva Seva Samithi, SJCE college Mysore and Parisara Prajna Kendra and supported by WASTE (Netherlands) implemented an eco sanitation toilet in the Swami Vivekananda Kannada Higher Primary school.

This is a source separating toilet where both urine and faeces are collected separately. The toilet was set up since the town of Dodballapur faces an acute water shortage almost throughout the year and water is not easily available for toilet use.

Children were explained the concept of eco toilet and its correct use. There was no talking down and the conversation happened with batches of 50 students. Questions were encouraged from the children and they came out with quite a remarkable understanding of the situation and the need for eco toilets as well as hygiene requirements after use. Teachers were more reluctant to understand the concept and it was then left to the children to set up a maintenance committee to look after the cleanliness of the toilet.

Its usage has been remarkably successful and toilet is used very effectively. A Ph. D student now runs a test protocol for the use of urine in crop production as a fertiliser. The children are the sole providers of the raw material for the experiment. Children have carried home the message of safe sanitation and the parents of the children have been among the first to queue up to collect urine as fertiliser use.

One key lesson was to engage children on an equal footing and not be shy in raising what are normally considered taboo issues. Adding a responsibility was seen as a positive step to the understanding of the situation and girl children were more forthcoming on issues and solutions.

Adaptation to a new and different system was not seen as a problem and psychological barriers of discussing human wastes in children was much less as compared to adults.

[Jyotsna Bapat](#), Independent Consultant, New Delhi (response 1)

I want to share this interesting experience I had while reviewing UNICEF initiatives in rural water and sanitation program. Two things work in getting a toilet in the house. The first one is a grandchild brought up in urban areas coming to visit the grand parents house and refusing to 'go out' for his 'needs'. So the grand parents have created a toilet just for his use.

The second and similar example is that when the child was told in school about the use of sanitation practices like hand washing and toilet use, he insisted that his parents build one for him. During the period that it was constructed, he chose to go his aunt's house in the neighbourhood, who already had a toilet.

So space and affordability are two important necessary conditions but love for your child /grand child always works. Therefore raising awareness through children invariably works.

[Rukmini Banerji](#), Pratham India, New Delhi

At Pratham, we have recently done a pictorial survey of water and sanitation. Data was collected by a local group in each district from a random sample of households from 30 villages in each district in 11 districts around the country.

The pictorial survey enabled all participants to get engaged.

We are hoping that somebody in the Water Community will want to use this tool with children in schools and tell us how it went ?

If interested, please do let us know.

The survey is called PAHELI (Peoples Audit of Health, Education and Livelihoods) - one of the partners is Arghyam. PAHELI was designed along the principles of ASER (Annual Status of Education Report) - that is facilitated annually across the country by Pratham and is executed by over 600 district partners.

Looking forward to mails from people interested in trying this out.

[D.K. Mohanty](#), Jyotirmayee Mahila Samiti, Kendrapara, Orissa

Greetings from Kendrapara !

The World Water Users' Forum has asked us to involve children in using water testing kits. This is a very good programme for children and is essential for long-term sustainability. We are interested in doing this in our district Kendrapara in Orissa. Looking for member' inputs on how to involve children in such programmes.

[Nandini Roy](#), National Institute of Medical Statistics, ICMR, New Delhi

This is with reference to Rukmini's mail, where she has mentioned using pictorial surveys among school studies for promoting water and sanitation issues among community.

I am interested in knowing more about the pictorial survey, i.e., content of the survey, process involved in documenting the survey, what were the explicit and implicit outcome of this exercise, and other details? Please share any document or details regarding the survey.

[Chandreyee Das](#), INSPIRATION, Kolkata

Our experience shows that children could be very efficient change agents.

We had taken up a programme with the Bardhaman Zilla Parishad under the aegis of UNICEF, Kolkata, in which we had designed a Child to Family to Community Approach to improve the health and hygiene situation in villages of Raina II and Memari I blocks with an emphasis on Sanitary Toilet use along with other issues.

The approach worked wonders. Initially the children of primary schools were mobilised through interactive aids like the BINDI BOARD where red and black bindis (or stickers) were used to indicate good and bad behaviour and other similar such indicators. The children were motivated to associate their behaviour with a red bindi and in the process got into a changed habit. Remarkable results were achieved in promoting footwear use, which prevented worm infestation in the long run. The parents were then involved in the process. School based guardian's meetings were called and a participatory mapping exercise was carried out to identify neighbourhoods and then to select a guardian representative for each neighbourhood. The guardian representatives were asked to conduct a basic household survey on toilet use, garbage disposal and source of drinking water. This was indicated on the map to visually demonstrate which neighbourhood was at which level on the environmental scale. The levels were again indicated through bindi - black (bad), maroon (moderate) and red (good) on the map. This served as a baseline.

The visual demonstration created a sense of competition among the guardian's reps. They were then trained on the basic technical contents of all the three environmental issues and were given an assignment to motivate the neighbourhood-specific families to adopt environmental friendly habits, which included systematic garbage disposal, use of low-cost sanitary toilets and drinking water management. The current status was noted on the base map to observe changes – as the bindis changed colours. Comparative analysis worked as stimulants. In the process the entire community was brought within the fold of the programme.

We could share the methodology in depth and also the different Behaviour Change aides. It is a success story on community mobilisation and institutionalisation.

[Mrinalinee Vanarase](#), IORA for Environmental Solutions, Pune (response 1)

Children are no doubt the most effective ambassadors and performers in water awareness and water resource management. Our present experience of Nirmal Ganga Abhiyan also proves the same fact. Nirmal Ganga Abhiyan (NGA) is an initiative undertaken by Ecological Society (Pune) for participatory ecological restoration of streams in villages. People voluntarily participate in the NGA by assessing their streams from an ecological perspective, and understand the stresses on these streams. Based on this, they implement restorative measures such as bank stabilization, in-stream habitat improvement and riparian vegetation enhancement.

We often experience that this entire process gets accelerated when students or children are involved. Moreover, this hands-on experience of stream restoration also helps them in understanding sanitation and water pollution problems in detail, right from the source point to the water body.

We generally work with children in following way –

1. We begin with taking a village and stream walk with students
2. Informal discussions and data collection on ecological history of stream, present status, stresses etc. are held
3. Later, we get them to do actual work on stream restoration
4. We also involve them in setting up a seed bank and encourage them to store seeds of all the fruits they eat and to disburse these in the wilderness. Care should be taken here to ensure that exotic, non-native plants are not introduced.
5. Students are also encouraged to monitor their streams round the year as per suggested checklist.

I will soon share the checklist of data base and monitoring with members, which is very useful and simple to fill. It would be very interesting to know if other members are willing to use this in their areas. Hopefully, this will create an essential data base for further restoration work. Meanwhile, the document below gives a few photographs of the effort:

<http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/environment/cr/res27040701.doc>

Sushant Kumar Singh, UNICEF, Patna

Dear Gyanendra,

I am happy to know that your question is a basic problem to adopt good hygiene behavior among children and ultimately by the community. Being very objective I would like to share my experiences with you which can be helpful to solve your question.

- We use a role play on hand washing during training and orientation to sensitise children.
- We also organize exposure visits to a school where all sanitation & hygiene activities have been adopted by children. This makes a good impression and creates a healthy competition for adopting such practices.
- We involve children in sanitation drive within the village.
- We motivate children to prepare a news letter including their personal experiences on sanitation & hygiene, including some poems, slogans, puzzles, cartoons, short play distribute this among all contributors and others.
- If you like I can send you a short draft of one such magazine which is under publication.
- Try to involve Panchayats more and more; once you motivate the Panchayat of your target area, 70% of your work is over.

All the best and keep it up. The life of many children are dependent on the work done by Water and Environmental Sanitation professionals, and we need to be more innovative

Pramel and Anju Gupta, Independent Consultants, Bhopal

I agree with Gnanendra's statement that children are harbingers of technology promotion and if we are able to teach children about water and sanitation practices, then the messages can be disseminated very effectively to the whole community - including their families.

I want to share my experiences of an evaluation of UNICEF's Child Environment Programme, done by Pragmatix Research and Advisory Services, among others. I was part of the evaluation in Balrampur and Lalitpur districts of Uttar Pradesh. We used a methodology called Quantitative Participatory Appraisal, which covers quantitative as well as qualitative data through questionnaire and best practices in the

area. While conducting the evaluation of school children on hand washing practices, we adopted a methodology of distributing sweets or some snacks to students, to see whether they washed their hands before eating or not. Most of them washed their hands, and some of them washed hands with water only.

Similarly to test their knowledge on health and hygiene we asked students to write answers to questions related to hygiene on a slip of paper (such as why we need to wash hands before eating and after defecation, use of soap, use of latrines etc.). Amazingly, we found that all students were aware of the theory behind water and sanitation, but these have not yet been fully adopted in their behaviour. The main reason behind this was non availability of soap and water at home as well at school. The reason for not using latrine was non-availability of water and that toilets were generally remained locked in school. Similar was the condition in the community.

In those schools where sanitation clubs and sanchar dals [communication groups] had been formed in schools, or where mothers' groups had been formed in villages where awareness was created among women regarding health, hygiene and sanitation, the knowledge among children was found to be good.

Along with children, the mothers in the family also play an important role in keeping their families free from diseases as they are the ones who can inculcate good habits in their children and in other family members. Members of some mothers' groups visit five households every day and create awareness related to safe drinking water, sanitation, personal hygiene, immunization etc. Every fortnight, they take part in rallies, marches and deliver messages with the help of pocket charts, slogans on sanitation.

Therefore, to sensitise children in appropriate sanitation behaviour (such as hand-washing, use of toilets, safe disposal of waste, etc.), it is better to use a similar methodology such as formation of mothers' groups, sanitation clubs and sanchar dals etc. - which are very good sources of communication and can also be used for creating awareness related to other governmental schemes and services. These groups are also very close to the community's heart, as they use local dialects and the community can accept ideas delivered to them through such groups on a large scale.

For awareness creation, UNICEF has used Information Education Communication (IEC) material for which Sanchar Dals were formed in almost all villages but these have not been able to achieve a lot. If water and sanitation has to be made a priority, then mass campaigning through audio-visual aids i.e. television and radio needs to be adopted. There are many cases where the community has adopted good messages, habits and practices through Television - for example pulse polio campaigning has reached remote villages and the community has understood its need and is coming to the polio booth itself for the safety of their children.

If any NGOs/agency adopts these methods, definitely success can be achieved in creating awareness related to hygiene and sanitation on a mass scale as a priority issue in the minds and heart of community. Once it becomes their prime issue, then they will try their best to fulfill what is required at any cost.

[Archana Mehendale](#), Independent Researcher, Bangalore

During 1991 and 1993, the Concerned for the Working Children facilitated a social mapping exercise that was conducted by rural children in Kundapur, Dakshina Kannada (Karnataka). The children studied the history and local ecology surrounding the river Varahi, looked at the interlinkages between the river and their rural life, its slow degradation and so on. Their participation in this intensive exercise helped them understand issues about conservation of natural resources and subsequently they were also involved in advocacy efforts in this area. More details at www.workingchild.org

Surendra Kumar Yadav, National Institute of Health & Family Welfare, New Delhi

The approach of involvement of children in safe drinking water and sanitation is really good and can be very effective. Children can play a vital role on such issues not only in the present generation but in future generations also. If children pick up the message effectively then this shall improve global health. If children are taught about safe drinking water and sanitation and related issues, then the dissemination and promotion of technology will happen through effective campaigns. This will result in mobilising the community for appropriate sanitation behaviour such as hand-washing, use of clean toilets, safe & sustainable disposal of waste, etc. The role of schoolteachers in this matter may be extremely important. Thus I feel that children must be involved in all programmes like safe drinking water, sanitation & health etc.

M V Ananthkrishnan, Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai (response 2)

We, here in IIT Bombay, have developed an interactive multimedia for nomadic children, which teaches them the three R's, and sensitises them towards clean water and personal hygiene.

B.M. Kandpal, Simar, Chamoli, Uttarakhand

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 states:

- *Children have the right to express their own opinions and to have them taken into account in any matter affecting them. Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 12*
- *The child shall have the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice. Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 13*

[See http://www.unicef.org/crc/index_30177.html for an analysis of the Convention by UNICEF]

In the context of the above, I wish to share the experience of an NGO in Uttarakhand called Sri Bhuvaneswari Mahila Ashram (SBMA), who have taken the above two agenda forward in a very innovative way. Through its ***Umang*** (meaning Exuberance) initiative, SBMA has established an innovative process that is taking child participation to higher levels by recognising them as a potential resource in the world of media – both regional and mainstream.

For further details of the Umang Project, please see the following link:

<http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/environment/cr/res30040701.doc> (Size: 35 KB)

This experiment is now being scaled up by SBMA and Plan in all 13 districts of Uttarakhand. The methodology has tremendous scope to sensitise children about water and sanitation issues. This will help them further sensitise adults in their community. Also, when these children become adults, they will constitute a sensitive citizenry.

Seema Raghunathan, Natco Trust, Hyderabad

My organization, the Natco Trust has been working in the slums of Hyderabad, and in the districts of Mahboobnagar, Medak, Nizamabad.

The approach to involve children is really effective in creating awareness in the rural and urban schools about safe drinking water and sanitation. Approaches that have built upon Teacher to Child, Child to Child, Child to parent paths have become a strong force for the Total Sanitation Campaign in Mahboobnagar district of Andhra Pradesh and in slums of Hyderabad.

We have introduced joyful and playful methods for children by means of puppetry, and trained them about good and bad habits using miming and one act plays etc. The impact was really very high, leading to total sanitation in the villages.

Lima Rosalind, WWF-India, New Delhi

Hi friends, this is in response to D.K. Mohanty's [mail](#).

Children's involvement in water testing needs a hands-on approach. However there are a few elements that we need to keep in mind, paramount among which is the safety aspects to prevent water contamination. Simple things like wearing gloves while handling the samples will go a long way.

Second, involving schools from the vicinity of a water body in water testing can be a sustainable activity, as the periodicity of testing can then be worked out without worrying about logistics. There are innumerable case studies on using the water testing kits by students as done in the Ganga Action Plan, the Yamuna Action Plan and even the Thames river clean up.

The period of monitoring can be fixed depending on the objectives for the water testing. This data should be made available to the village and the district authorities to ascertain the quality of the water which may be used for human and animal consumption.

Children should be made the authors of such an exercise and the data collected should be put online by children themselves.

Children are excellent agents of change. Let us teach them and learn from them and nurture their talents through such participative exercises.

Arunabha Majumder, All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, Kolkata

In school, students must learn the following with respect to water and environmental sanitation :

- What is safe water
- Water- sanitation- health linkages
- Illness and its consequences
- Ideas about water quality
- Sources of water
- Water conservation
- Need for protection of water
- Ideas about recycling of water
- Rain water harvesting
- Simple methods of water treatment
- Why to stop open defecation
- Importance of use of toilets
- What is sanitary latrine

- Ideas about low cost latrine
- Maintaining safe distance between toilet pit and water source
- Importance of hand-washing
- Importance of regular nail-cutting, mouth-washing, bathing
- Importance of personal hygiene
- Domestic and environmental cleanliness
- Solid waste segregation (organic & inorganic) at source
- Use of containers for storing waste
- House to house collection of Solid Waste
- Composting
- Vermi-composting
- Importance of good drainage
- Hygiene in food handling, cooking, eating, storage, etc.
- Use of smokeless chulha

The above components can be taught in stages to generate awareness. Students may also be motivated to make others aware. The teachers must be oriented on these issues through refresher training program. IEC materials also need to be developed. Students may be involved for development of IEC materials also.

R. Srikanth, WaterAid, New Delhi

In my view, if students learn hygiene and sanitation as part of their curriculum, they will end up just passing exams. In fact, groups of students should be encouraged to do "live projects " as practical lessons in each of the items outlined by Majumder. In case students are doing testing using portable kits, they could cover one or two parameters in water quality from class four till they reach secondary school like the PH and TDS; Fluoride on a quarterly/ yearly basis from water bodies like lakes and rivers; handpumps, etc.

By doing so, they will be having considerable data on a number of phenomenon such as Eutrophication [water pollution caused by excessive plant nutrients], acidity, sources of pollution, etc. based on the changes in ph and other values. This data collected over 5 years is so useful in predicting the trends in water quality and is useful in understanding the impact of environment on water quality.

In a vast country like India, we seldom have data on water quality of all existing water body in rural areas. Various programmes of United Nations Environment Programme, like Global Environment Monitoring System [GEMS Water <http://www.gemswater.org>] and Monitoring of Indian National Aquatic Resources (MINARS) are focused on inland rivers and lakes located in urban areas. By involving children constructively, we can also create a data base on rural water quality. We need to experiment further with this idea.

Mrinalinee Vanarase, IORA for Environmental Solutions, Pune *(response 2)*

It is a great pleasure reading various efforts and success stories of involving children in constructive work.

Further to my response to the role of children in creating awareness on water and sanitation, I give below a checklist that students can use for recording observations for eco-restoration of streams.

<http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/environment/cr/res19040701.doc> (Size: 42 KB)

Hope this note motivates members to take up stream restoration. Students can gather data in the suggested formats easily and they also take interest in monitoring if they feel that the activity is important and interesting.

We would be happy to provide any other information if required. We would also like to collect data from different locations if it is possible for members to fill the data and send it to us. It will serve as a good data bank.

[Pramel Gupta](#), Bhopal Rehabilitation, Bhopal

Arunabha has covered all water and environmental sanitation topics in the right manner.

In my Child Environment Programme evaluation experience, that I talked about in my earlier mail, wherever we found self motivated teachers in schools interested in water and sanitation, we found they delivered excellently. Otherwise, most teachers appeared to be interested and skilled in limited activities. So, if we can take up intensive capacity building and micro planning and build teacher's motivation and internalization of this issue, including the social responsibilities of various stakeholders, we may get better results.

[Madhu Ranjan](#), USAID, New Delhi

A lot of extremely useful exchange of experiences and views has already taken place since you raised the issue. I'm just sharing some more of our experiences under the SWASTHH+ program, where we partner with UNICEF and the state governments in select districts of Karnataka and Jharkhand. The objective is to improve the school environment with a focus on hygiene and sanitation so that there is an improvement in children's enrolment, attendance and retention, especially for girls, and eventually, improvement in learning.

A multi-pronged approach is being used to bring about a change in the hygiene behaviour of school children and through them, the communities. Intensive efforts have been put in to bring more emphasis on issues in hygiene education that need greater emphasis in the Environmental Sciences curriculum, and relevant teach and learning materials (TLMs) and lesson plans have been developed. Teachers have also been provided intensive training and school camps have been held. The camps train children in understanding their roles and responsibilities, and practical training is given in constructing soak pits and compost pits, preparing Oral Rehydration Salt, and in cleaning and maintaining toilets, etc. The camps also introduce a system to help the school children track the maintenance of facilities, hygiene practices and health status of all students in the school by marking these on charts specially designed for the purpose. Children's cabinets have been formed in schools and trained. Training has also been imparted to the Village Education Committees and other community members such as Neighbourhood Leaders who are actively engaged in disseminating health and sanitation messages and in monitoring the quality of service delivery as well as the changes in the sanitation profile of their village.

Health and hygiene messages are also written prominently on school walls and toilet walls. Hand washing before eating and after defecating is encouraged and reinforced by teachers and Child cabinet members. In Karnataka, a set of books has been especially developed and provided to schools that make sanitation and hygiene activities challenging and fun. These books deal with issues such as water management, waste management, personal hygiene etc. in an interesting and non preachy way, thus motivating children to work together on hygiene related issues and bring about the required change. Besides, there are school-community projects wherein the most pressing health/hygiene/environment issues existing in the area are jointly analyzed by the school and the community and efforts are made to address them together.

Slowly but surely, the initiative is bringing about a visible change in the hygiene practices of students and communities.

V.R. Raghavan, Oxfam GB, Kolkata

It is very encouraging to read the contributions from members on this subject. I am a firm believer that children make a huge difference in development, and are most unspent force in the country and there is a great potential to tap this energetic, innovative and forward-looking section of society. The experience of children taking lead in disaster management in Cuba is a living example where the government tapped the potential of children, as a result of which there has not been a single casualty of children in disasters (read hurricanes) in the past 30 years.

As regards the query, I wish to share my experience of working with children in two phases of my career, one as a teacher way back in early 90's and later as a developmental professional in recent years.

I was part of a group of teachers who were promoting scientific temper and environmental awareness among children in schools in Andhra Pradesh. At the same time, the Government of India launched an innovative programme called National Children's Science Congress, through the National Council for Science and Technology. In 1995, the theme was Clean India (this was immediately after the Surat epidemic). Many students in the state had developed innovative ideas of clean water, hygiene promotion, and solid waste management. Children were supported by few NGOs to develop these projects like vermi composting, fisheries in urban sewage treatment through oxidation process, puppetry as media for communicating on Malaria and epidemics and how to prevent them and protect from them.

These projects were published by the Andhra Pradesh Academy of Sciences, Hyderabad and will be provided if you write to: Coordinator, Andhra Pradesh Academy of Sciences, VC Lodge Road, Osmania University Campus, Hyderabad.

Coming to my present work in Orissa, while working with school children in promotion of water and sanitation in flood prone areas, we used participatory analysis of situation in the school and village. Children come up with their analysis of water and sanitation situation at their homes, neighbourhood, community level and school level. I am enclosing a document of school level sanitation plan developed by children (currently in Oriya) for your reference. Once we get the English version, I could share with the members as well. The map in here is self-explanatory. Please see the link below:

<http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/environment/cr/res03050701.pdf> (size 2 MB)

After identifying the problems, children develop a dream plan for their village and school and identify the processes to achieve these. Thus, an activity plan is developed. In a few schools, the plan is integrated with the Total Sanitation Programme and the gaps are supported by Oxfam and their implementing partners. For further details, please contact me.

Looking forward to learning more from the community on the subject.

Jyotsna Bapat, Independent Consultant, New Delhi (*response 2*)

Toilets are seen as 'luxury goods' in the villages that I have visited in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Maharashtra. A majority of the men I talked to in these visits had a similar perception about why they

needed toilets in their houses. In sum, they felt that, "When you reconstruct an old house and you have daughters in law who have lived in towns and married into the family recently, then you add a toilet to the house, provided you have space. Since it is a luxury item, people are not interested in the cheap unpolished basins that RSMs provide"

This interpretation of toilet as a luxury is not too alien to urban cultures, so I was not surprised when I got the above responses.

This niche is something that some RSMs in Betul district in Madhya Pradesh were sensitive to, and started providing value-added toilets for sale. These RSMs are doing very well.

Hope this starts a debate.

Sweta Patnaik, WaterAid India, Bhubaneswar

I am sharing the following experiences with members.

1) WaterAid in India, through its partner NGOs, promotes Child Parliaments and water, sanitation and hygiene clubs in certain partner schools.

An example of the former is WaterAid's partner Ruchika Social Service Organisation in Bhubaneswar, that runs special schools for street children and promotes Child Parliaments that debate on the water and sanitation scenario in Orissa. Children actually dress up as Members of Parliament / Legislative Assembly and actually enact a mock of the parliament in progress complete with a Speaker. They raise questions and answers on drinking water and sanitation facilities and provisions made by the Govt. For this, the organisation provides updated information to these children.

On promotion of water, sanitation and hygiene clubs in schools, Gram Jyoti, another partner NGO of WaterAid in India working in Deoghar district of Jharkhand promotes 3 clubs in each school with the help of hygiene educators and school teachers. The membership of these clubs is on a rotation basis so that maximum numbers of children get a chance to be in these clubs, feel important about themselves and take their roles seriously.

As a part of its nationwide hand washing campaign, WaterAid India has a programme known as the "Chakmak Champion". Some of the partner schools select a "Chakmak" every month from each class – who is the "cleanest" child, and follows correct hand-washing practices, uses a toilet at home and school, uses footwear, etc. and most importantly, motivates others to do so.

2) On sanitation technology for children, UNICEF has helped come up with special child friendly pans which are being used in toilets at Anganwadis / balwadis under the Total Sanitation Campaign of the Govt.

3) Under the Child Environment Programme (CEP) of UNICEF in Kendrapara district of Orissa, the nodal implementing NGO, Nature's Club, with support from the Kendrapara district administration and District Water and Sanitation Mission has promoted MEENA CLUBS in two blocks of the district. These clubs consisted of girls from the age of six to sixteen who were inspired by the MEENA animation films of UNICEF and tried to change the Water and Sanitation situation in the villages where they were formed. The group of these young girls acted as pressure groups motivating and urging parents, grand parents, uncles, aunts and the community to construct and use toilets in their households, to repair and maintain drinking water sources as well as community bathrooms etc. When school toilets were constructed in one of these blocks, club members helped to generate quite a substantial community contribution. The district was quite inspired with this.

Megha Phansalkar, Water Supply and Sanitation Department, Navi Mumbai

As you know, Maharashtra has taken lead in sanitation sector with 1900 gram Panchayats receiving the Nirmal Gram Puraskar at New Delhi on 4th May 2004. A major credit of the movement goes to our cleanliness messengers from school across Maharashtra. The water supply and sanitation department has initiated a unique approach "**Swachhata Doot**" (Cleanliness messengers). To persuade people to practice clean and hygienic habits, some school children are also playing a vital role as '*Swachchhta Doots*'.

The little messengers go from house to house and instruct the family members, young and old, about how they can maintain hygienic conditions by adopting simple ways like using soaps, storing drinking water at high places, using ladles to scoop water, washing hands before having meals and after using toilets, etc.

As IEC material, a booklet in Marathi language has been published with details about the concept, how to implement it, role of these messengers, their sanitation card, the role of teachers, day wise curriculum, etc. If required, a copy of the same can be translated in English and Hindi language for mass circulation. We would also encourage exposure visits to our schools to see the implementation of the innovative idea.

Shradha, DAV Public School, Shimla

As an educator, I have observed the zeal and dedication with which students participate in activities related to environment awareness.

As regards their specific role in water management, they need to be sensitized to the value of water, which is the elixir of life. They should be made familiar with the traditional as well as Modern Methods of Water conservation, such as, Rain Water Harvesting, Drip Irrigation etc. Proper storage and recycling of water is also an important feature and children should be dealing with such activities themselves in order to understand the vitality of their actions. Sanitation is another important area, where urban children need to be exposed to the rural areas, so that they at least realize their good fortune.

The most important thing is awareness and giving a firsthand experience to children who are capable of contributing hugely to any cause.

Following links maybe useful to members:

<http://edugreen.teri.res.in/explore/water/conser.htm>

www.dot.co.pima.az.us/flood/wh/

www.ci.tucson.az.us/water/tsnwtr/conserves/outdoor/harvest.htm

Anil Jaggi, SEWAA, Dehradun

Nice to see a new topic on this platform.

Please visit www.cleanindia.org, which is a student-centric "Community Led Environment Action Network " (CLEAN-India) programme run by Development Alternatives, New Delhi for the past 5 years in 72 Indian cities through 6 schools from each city.

Students learn to conduct air and water tests on their own with the help of a local NGO coordinator.

Depinder Kapur, WaterAid, New Delhi

This is with reference to Pramel's response. I am raising the following issues for further discussion with Pramel and other members.

Pramel has made some very good suggestions on:

- The role of children's sanitation clubs in schools
- Mothers' clubs to do active promotion of hygiene messages of hand washing and
- Community based action for rallies, campaigns, materials, communication and a social pressure/acceptance and for understanding this priority among the larger community and not just among each individual or only children.

However, I find that the most significant input is that for these clubs and groups to get going - the motivation and stimulus normally comes from some external project and NGO, teacher or government staff. Does this mean that this support, that is so critical in behaviour change, has to be organised from outside, and in doing this the role of NGOs, dedicated teachers and rural government staff (and their presence and persistent engagement with rural communities and children) is a social cost that has long term benefits and must be paid for? There is currently very little attention to the effort of dedicated workers on the ground and that this work needs recognition and, in case of a local NGO – staff salaries and movements costs. Don't you think this is ignored?

Secondly, if hygiene promotion is not institutionalized for a significant period of time, then behaviour change will not take place. Again, this needs some institutional commitment of time and resources.

Non availability of soap is mentioned as one reason for children not washing their hands before eating. Safe Hygiene practice promotes use of soil or ash. In this case, why is ash not promoted?

Thirdly behaviour change is supposed to be long term, once it happens. But given that soap is the more preferred long term medium of safe hand washing – does inability to buy soap among the poorest families – become a real barrier for long term behaviour change for hand washing?

Finally, the query was asking if children can influence the change in priorities of adults for adopting and using latrines. From our experience and work, can we conclude that children can motivate behaviour change among adults? Generally it may be true that love for children may motivate some parents and grandparents to go for individual toilets. But is this such a major motivating factor (and hence a barrier) that is influencing construction and sustainable usage of latrines in rural India?

K. N. Vijayanthi, UNICEF, Chennai

UNICEF in partnership with the Government is involved in Total Sanitation Campaign including promotion of Household toilets, School Sanitation and Hygiene Education, water quality monitoring and surveillance. The main focus is promotion of key hygiene behaviour like ensuring cent per cent usage of toilets, hand washing with soap after critical behaviour and consumption of safe drinking water. UNICEF has produced wide range of printed materials including posters, booklets, flip charts for various target groups. I request you to contact Project Officer, Water and Sanitation, UNICEF, Lucknow for further assistance.

Further, UNICEF is also in partnership with REAL, a NGO have involved children from 40 villages in Community water quality monitoring in Nagapattinam, a Tsunami affected district in Tamil Nadu.

Children are trained to test water using 12 parameters with water testing kits provided. This is well documented by WES-Net India and the United Nations Team for Tsunami Recovery Support at <http://www.un.org.in/untrs/>. For further details, you can contact Mr. Pieter, Executive Secretary. Email: real@md4.vsnl.net.in. You can also contact Ms. Lopamudra, Assistant Project Officer, UNICEF Office, Bhubaneswar for any assistance.

Kashinath Vajpai, TNS India, New Delhi

The official figure of sanitation coverage in India has reached 45 per cent in 2007, whereas in 7 states it is over 70 per cent. The Government of India's Total Sanitation Campaign programme aims to cover all the country's one million schools by 2007, as schools are well recognized and turning into safe and healthy places of learning about sanitation and hygiene practices.

The Total Sanitation Campaign is among the eight flagship programme highlighted by the Finance Minister of India recently, with separate budgetary allocation. The Rural Development Minister of India also opined that sanitation and safe drinking water are 'more important than the increase in GDP or Sensex'. Sanitation promotion and school sanitation & hygiene education have been recognized as important developmental indicators to the country by a number of national and international agencies working in India.

'Sanitation is more important than Independence', was the important highlight of Nirmal Gram Puraskar ceremony, that recently held in New Delhi. This speaks about the attempts made by 4959 award winning Gram Panchayat & Block Panchayat from 22 states of India. These Panchayat Raj Institution functionaries also took a pledge about honesty, transparency, clean and pollution free environment, and about making children go regularly to school.

Taking stock from above, on the query on 'role of children in spreading water and sanitation awareness', I wish to reiterate that in general, the agencies working in different rural development issues are always trying to reinvent the wheel rather replicating past successes. Routinely, most projects are devised with a mandate to run 'business as usual'. Therefore, the numbers of programme that attempt to make a 'breakthrough' in sanitation are very few, whereas the agencies working in the country on this issue are many.

On the pretext of helping local, regional and national government in achieving the sanitation 'targets', the formation of 'clubs' (hygiene club, children club, mother's club, etc.) and 'groups' (self help groups, watsan groups, sanitation group, etc.), are among a few examples which are sometimes facilitated and recorded in a number of projects. These are run & supported by agencies with a model and approach which they understand as 'feasible', rather making it participatory (in a real sense). In my opinion, the high administrative costs (especially at the top level) must be observed closely to ensure availability of more funds/resources at operational level (programme implementation level) and to cater to the sustained need of implementer/field workers, etc. in the long run. The institutionalization of hygiene promotion programme and long term commitment of agencies towards this cause is quite important.

I differ to the comment on promotion of 'soil' for safe hygiene practices. When we talk about behaviour change, affordability to buy soap or to use local means (reetha seeds, ash, etc.) should never be a barrier (there are many examples of this). There are also a number of examples where children and women have been the motivating factor in behaviour change for the other members in a family.

Hemalatha Patil, WaterAid india, Bangalore

I am sharing my experience regarding school sanitation under WaterAid assisted projects in southern India.

Mysore district has been a pilot in school sanitation. There are around 2040 schools (both government and aided schools) in the district and the state government has taken up the mission of achieving 100% sanitation in schools since year 2000.

WaterAid has a partner in Mysore district called Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement (SVYM). Their main focus is on behavioural change communication among school children. Presently, they are working in 120 schools of H.D. Kote taluk, reaching out to around 16,000 children. A survey was conducted during 2005 in Mysore district covering all blocks among both Government and aided schools. The objective of the survey was to assess the availability and usage of infrastructure in schools regarding WATSAN and to explore the personal hygiene practices prevalent among school children, especially the hand washing habit. The survey was carried out by the NGOs SVYM, MYRADA and VIKASANA.

Some of the key findings of the study are as follows.

- 85% of the schools had sanitation infrastructure.
- In 66% of the schools the maintenance of school toilet was satisfactory.
- 79% of the schools have a water source.
- Hand washing habits among the school children was encouraging but only 20% of the children used soap.

Gaps identified in school sanitation:

- Hygiene education and behavioural change related activities were not being addressed.
- School toilets were seldom used by children for defecation.
- No impact was observed on the community in school sanitation.
- Maintenance of school toilets needs to be improved.

The survey has helped SVYM to address the above gaps in school sanitation through WaterAid assistance. Today SVYM is directly reaching 120 schools and has formed school cabinets in all 120 schools with the help of school teachers. Each school cabinet has 10 children. SVYM is creating awareness among school children on issues related to school hygiene and sanitation, school and village cleanliness, personal hygiene, etc. through street plays , documentary films, conducted quizzes, developing different participatory learning games to create awareness , organising inter-school exposure visits including Parent Teacher Association members, role plays etc.

They also help in setting out roles and responsibilities of school cabinet in consultation with school children. As a result, there has been an improvement in water, sanitation and hygiene practices among school children and the community. Nearly 50% of school cabinets have set up a sanitation fund in the school aimed at meeting the recurring expenses of maintenance of school toilets. Improved personal hygiene among school children (indicators- Trimming of nails, hand washing with soap, wearing slippers, etc.) . Beyond the schools, the children have considerably influenced hygiene practices in their families (indicator - increase in household level construction and its usage). Similarly, we have a partner in Tamil Nadu called Gramalaya, who is also promoting same kind of activities.

Many thanks to all who contributed to this query!

If you have further information to share on this topic, please send it to Solution Exchange for the Water Community at se-wes@solutionexchange-un.net and/or Solution Exchange for the Education Community at se-ed@solutionexchange-un.net with the subject heading "Re: [se-watr][se-ed] Query: Role of Children in Spreading Water and Sanitation Awareness . Additional Reply."

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