

Domain: Water
Subjects: Safe sources of drinking water

Age groups: 4-14 years

3.2 I drink.....safe water!

Learning goals:

Knowledge:

- The children know the importance of safe drinking water and the risks of drinking water that is less safe.
- They can distinguish between safer and less safe sources.
- They know the local water environment (geography).
- They can describe water treatment processes (science and technology).

Attitude:

- They prefer to drink safe water.

Practical skills:

- They can purify water.
- They can draw, cut, model things.

Psychosocial life skills:

- Free expression, interpersonal communication; analytical skills.

Participatory methods:

Drawing/finger-painting and questioning. For older children also other forms of image making, such as cutting and pasting, and making paper or clay models.

Materials:

- Paper and pencils, paint or markers, or slates and chalk, or paper, scissors and glue, or modelling clay
- Drinking cups; glass bottles for solar disinfection; utensils to boil water.
- A saree, pot with gravel and sand, or other materials for filtering water, according to local feasibility and practices

Activities:

- Ask the children from where they get their drinking water.
- Ask each child to draw/model/cut and paste his or her drinking water source (techniques adjusted to age).
- Let them display their drawings on the wall or floor; older children may also group drawings by type of water source.
- Facilitate a discussion about what children and others do in these sources, e.g. swim, wash clothes, bathe, water animals, wash cars/lorries, take drinking water, etc.
- Encourage the children to discuss what this means for the cleanliness of the water and what this may mean for their stomachs if they drink this water.
- Ask older children to write the names of water-borne diseases in local and official languages on the blackboard/slates/cards/notebooks.

Demonstration

- For younger children, show the preparation of safe water according to what is locally feasible. For example, where people may not have access to enough fuel and/or time to boil water, focus on solar disinfection or water filtration, e.g. using a sand filter or a three-folded saree. (The saree will not purify the water, only sift out larger particles.) (For filtration, see also 3.6 Filtering the flow.)
- With older children, facilitate a discussion about feasibility of the various treatment methods, asking for example:
 - What may dissuade people from boiling their drinking water?
 - What makes it hard for some children to bring safe(r) drinking water to school?
 - What alternatives can they think of to solve/reduce problems?

Application:

- Let the children make a drawing on the importance of safer drinking water in whatever way they wish (free expression). Ask literate children to add messages.
- Let them take the drawings home to show and, if agreed, put it on the wall at home.
- The next day/lesson, facilitate an open discussion about what they have done at home with the drawing and how their parent(s) reacted.
- For older children, link the activity with an experiment (e.g. solar disinfection (SODIS) of drinking water or sand filtration, link with a visit to the local water facilities, etc.)

Monitoring sources of drinking water

- Monitor practices in class. Did all children bring safe(r) drinking water from home? If not, do not blame the child, but find out why, and follow up with the parents.
- For older children, do a pocket voting exercise, as described below.
- Draw, or let the children make drawings of the different local sources of drinking water.
- Lay them out on the floor, or hang them on the wall, always at the back of the class.
- Fix or place a paper bag or any other receptacle under each drawing.
- Give each child a bean, seed or slip of paper for voting. Let each child go to the back of the class and ask it to place the bean or slip in the receptacle under the source which their family generally uses for drinking water.
- At the end of the exercise, help the children display the contents of each bag on the floor, count the numbers and write them in a table on the blackboard.
- Facilitate a discussion on safe and unsafe sources and ways of problem solving.

Learning indicators:

- The children can list safer and less safe local drinking water sources. They can explain the consequences of drinking unsafe water.
- Older children can mention at least one disease caused by drinking unsafe water (by e.g. writing them on slates or cards).
- Children are proud to have safe drinking water in school.
- Older children help clean and refill reservoirs with clean water and/or help to improve drinking water habits or conditions in the school/home/community.
- Children drink safe or safer water whenever possible.
- They can draw, cut, model things. For older children: they can demonstrate simple treatment methods; home practice of safe water source use.
- They show skills of free expression and inter-personal communication; analytical skills; awareness of local realities including gender and poverty; sympathy with less fortunate others (empathy); capacity to make own decisions.

Note:

The reality in many schools, communities and homes is that it is still difficult to have 100% safe drinking water. The teacher can focus on which are the safest sources of drinking water locally, and what might be done to use these for drinking water, and how other drinking water can be made safer.

Competence:

Safer use of drinking water



Children drinking water in India (Photo: Sunil K. Dutt)