

Domain: Water supply
Subjects: Source contamination, water quality

Age group: 8-14 years

3.7 The rainmakers

Learning goals:

Knowledge:

- Children can outline environmental factors that result in unsafe drinking water.

Attitude:

- They feel able to evaluate good and bad behaviours related to the use of water sources.

Practical skills:

- They can discriminate effectively between safe and unsafe water for their use.

Psychosocial life skills:

- They can work in a group, act a skit, express themselves, reflect and analyse/think critically, are aware of and want to change gender and social inequalities, can make realistic suggestions to solve/reduce problems, can make decisions to change their own unsafe behaviours.

Participatory methods:

- Skit (little drama)

Materials:

Seven children

Activities:

- Identify seven children who want to do a skit.
- Share the story below or a similar story. Choose names in the local language. Give each child a role.
- Support the group to emphasise the sounds and noises for effect and humour.

The scene opens on a deserted, make-believe pond. Mama Atieno arrives, carrying a bucket of washing. Singing a song, she unloads her washing and begins to wash her clothes. After a while a herd of goats, represented by two children on all-fours come in, snorting noisily and being herded by a third child. He watches his goats watering, and then turns to urinate on the bank of the water source. After Mama Atieno finishes her washing she begins to bathe. Two women walk in with pails on their heads and (using make-believe calabashes) start to transfer water into their containers. At this moment a local teacher (child number seven) comes in and silently observes the group.

- Ask the group to stop what they are all doing. Draw attention to activities that are going on using rhetorical questions such as, 'Mama Onyango, are you really going to draw water here rather than from the protected well?'
- Explain the source of the contamination levels stepwise, which can result from defecation near the water source, clothes washing, livestock grazing, bathing, swimming, vehicle washing, etc.
- Invite questions from all children to get them to understand how many diseases can result from the contamination.

For younger children, the skit may stop with the identification of the different contaminating behaviours and the understanding that urine, animal excreta and stools may in this way enter the water and may be scooped up in diluted form by those who collect water.

- Link the story with questions and answers about, and an overview and explanation of the diseases that can come from drinking or standing in contaminated water. Depending on age, include official names, symptoms, transmission, prevention and treatment.

Application:

- Ask the children to list all practices that may contaminate water in the various water sources in the community.
- Ask them what can happen when other people drink or stand in this water. Ask the children for local names of diseases that may be transmitted.
- Ask older children to give also the official names of these diseases and their symptoms, prevention and treatment.
- Play writing, listing and sorting games, e.g. the children have to match local names of diseases with official names, match diseases with symptoms, prevention and treatment, and link practices with diseases.
- Question and answer games: one half of the class can give practices and the other half must then give the possible disease. Correct answers get a positive mark, wrong ones a negative one. After a given number, the roles are reversed and the other group gets the chance to ask about (new) behaviours.
- Make a table on the blackboard with five persons who differ in sex, age, and the kind of work each one does. Give each person a local name and talk about what they do that is related to water (e.g. swimming, cattle watering, farming, mining).
- Now ask which kinds of contamination may occur due to the practices of each person and discuss why this is so and what can be done.
- In the same way, and with older children, facilitate the identification of who are most at risk to be infected by the diseases through which type of activity. Examples are schoolchildren (boys only, or boys and girls, depending on gender norms), who drink water during swimming or may catch schistosomiasis), women and girls who wash clothes while standing in water (schistosomiasis), families without a safe source of drinking water. Use the activity on sheet 3.6, Filtering the flow to refresh earlier learning on the safe water chain.

Learning indicators:

- Children can give at least five ways in which sources for drinking water in their community may be contaminated.
- They know what diseases may result in their community.
- They can name safe(r) and unsafe sources of water in their community.
- They can identify major actors who cause the five ways of contamination and can indicate problem reducing action, including for themselves.
- They can mention what practices they themselves avoid or adopt to reduce water source contamination and which practices they could still change.

Competence:

Safe water chain