

## Teacher's notes: Why is clean water important?

### Objective

Students explore the difference between clean and dirty water; how people use and access water, comparing Australia and Uganda. Students will then develop a list of personal hygiene behaviours that rely on using clean water.

This activity would suit students in middle and upper primary.

### Resources

- 2 x bottles of water. Bottles should be transparent. One bottle should have clean water in it. Add some dirt etc to the other bottle to make the water dirty and brown-ish in appearance.
- 1 x copy of the Student Handout - "Water Images" per group.
- Optional 3 x 20 litre or 2 x 25 litre buckets.

Note: Recommend print the "Water Images" in colour.

### Activity

Introduce students to the idea of 'clean' versus 'dirty' water. Explain that clean water is water that is of such good quality it can be used for drinking and it won't cause you to become sick. Show the bottle of clean water. Then explain that dirty water is contaminated; it can have soil and other things in it that are likely to make you sick if you drink it. Show the bottle of dirty water.

As a class brainstorm some of the ways water is important. How do we use water? Write up the answers on the board.

Option: For younger students, talk through some of the ways people use water using the first three water images on the handouts to help explain. Ask students what other ways they can think of that people use water.

Advise students that "the UN suggests that each person needs [a minimum of] 20-50 litres of safe freshwater a day to ensure their basic needs for drinking, cooking and cleaning."<sup>1</sup>

Option: Show students how much this is either by using 3 x 20 litre empty buckets, or show students a 1 x litre bottle and tell them they would need 20-50 of these bottles per day to have the minimum recommended amount of clean water.

In Australia people use an average of 285 litres of water per person per day.<sup>2</sup>

100 percent of Australians are assessed as having access to clean water. In Uganda, where Lucy lives, 90 percent of people living in urban areas (cities and towns) have access to clean water, and only 60 percent of people living in rural areas have access to clean water. Overall 64 percent of Ugandans have access to clean water.<sup>3</sup>

Globally more than one out of every six people in the world does not have access to clean water.<sup>4</sup>

Option: Ask one out of every six students to stand up. Tell students if the classroom represented every person on the planet, these are the people who would not have any access to clean water. Let them know that more people have only limited access to clean water.

Break students into small groups. Give each group 1 x complete set of images.

Using the handout “Water Images”, ask students think about the differences in how they use and access water in their lives compared with Lucy and her family. The first three photos show uses of water while the last three show where/how water can be accessed. Ask students to discuss what they see in the photos, and compare this with how they obtain and use water at home.

Either as a class or in small groups, ask students to come up with a list of the ways that people can use water to stay healthy.

## Notes

When brainstorming uses of water, encourage students to think about how people use water individually, how they use it around the house, how people use water for recreation, and if they know of any commercial uses for water, for example in farming.

Examples of personal hygiene/healthy behaviours involving clean water could include:

- regular bathing and face washing;
- washing hands regularly before eating, after sneezing and going to the toilet;
- brushing teeth;
- drinking lots of water;
- washing fruit and vegetables; and
- washing clothes, dishes, towels and sheets to keep them clean.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: [http://www.unwater.org/statistics\\_san.html](http://www.unwater.org/statistics_san.html) [accessed 16 Dec 2010]

<sup>2</sup> Source: <http://www.nwc.gov.au/www/html/236-water-use-in-australia.asp> [accessed 16 Dec 2010]

<sup>3</sup> Source: <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/> [accessed 16 Dec 2010]

<sup>4</sup> Source: [http://www.unwater.org/statistics\\_san.html](http://www.unwater.org/statistics_san.html) [accessed 16 Dec 2010]