Swiss Water & Sanitation Consortium

With support from Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, Confédération suisse, Confederazione Svizzera, Confederaziun svizra — Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

Blue Schools – the Practical Teaching Experience in line with SDG 6 Targets

Blue because **Water** is common to all aspects: Watershed, Waste & WASH

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August 2017

Background

The Blue School concept was pioneered by the International Rainwater Harvesting Alliance (IRHA) and further developed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and partners. In addition to activities related to **Water, Hygiene and Sanitation (WASH)**, a Blue School promotes **school gardens** as a practical place to demonstrate the relationship between food production and an efficient management of water; as well as **watershed and land management practices** and **solid waste management**. The concept builds on the WASH in School (WINS) community of practice and addresses all SDG 6 targets.

What is Blue School?

A Blue School is a school that offers a healthy learning environment where students are encouraged to take up healthier and more environmentally-conscious lifestyles. Activities are geared toward children in upper primary and/or secondary school classes. In line with the WASH in Schools (WINS) community of practice, Blue School seeks to inspire students as potential change agents in their communities and thus encourages to outreach in households and through community events.

The Blue School concept is neither a new curriculum nor intended to add to the current workload of teachers. The practical exercises are meant to support teachers by giving them ideas on how they can practically demonstrate the concepts learned in the classrooms. The Blue School concept does not prescribe any approaches but focuses on learning objectives and practical learning exercises.

Blue School is a **pathway:**

WASH should be addressed as a priority before embarking in gardening or introducing waste separation and composting. With time, other environmental-friendly activities to demonstrate good land and water management practices can also be introduced depending on the context; and other topics such as nutrition, energy, disaster risks reduction and climate change can be added.

Catalogue of Technologies – selected examples

From Plants to Food

Keyhole Gardens
A single, compact unit, designed to use less water – a compost and garden in the same 3m radius

Bucket or Bottle Drip Irrigation
Even when rainfall is low or erratic, the bucket drip irrigation system enables farmers to nourish and grow the crops they need

Composting Pit
Shallow pits for the collection of waste materials and creation of compost

Zai or Planting Pits
Zai pits are a traditional method for rehabilitating dry lands and restoring soil fertility

Sanitation & Hygiene

Tippy Tap
An easy technique for washing hands with soap that can be made at home

Drinking water

Ceramic Water Filters
A pot-shaped filter that fits into a receptacle

Watershed

Infiltration Trenches
An infiltration or percolation trench is a method for managing rain runoff, preventing flooding and reducing downstream erosion

Gender & Growth

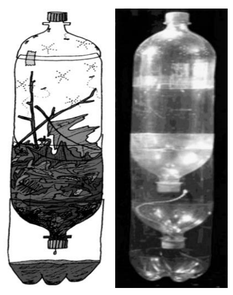
Reusable Pads
For Menstrual hygiene management: trainings on making pads for focal teachers to cascade to adolescent girls

The Blue School Kit

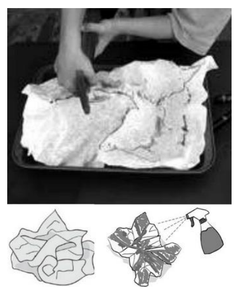
The Blue School Kit provides guidance to education authorities and school personnel, including:

I. A **Concept Brief** defining a Blue School, minimum requirements, key principles and components, including a step by step road map on how best to engage government institutions and build ownership of the school stakeholders
II. A **Facilitator's Guide** with suggestions for learning objectives for each component and practical ideas for teachers to use with students
III. A **Catalogue of Technologies** that can be demonstrated in a school or its environs at low cost, focusing mainly on watershed & land management, waste, as well as drinking water, sanitation and hygiene
IV. A **Catalogue of Practical Exercises** for teachers to complement theoretical lessons, requiring materials at little to no cost for school-based activities
V. An **Ecoregion Book** to support learning about the natural features, resources and constraints of a given environment—useful for planning Blue School activities and selecting appropriate demonstration technologies

Catalogue of Practical Exercises – selected examples



Decomposition Bottle
To understand the process of decomposition in the formation of compost



Crumpled Paper Watershed Model
To design & understand topography –spray the model and watch the water run down slopes and soak in in low areas

Inspiring the next generation of Water sector champions

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Since 2011, the eight NGO partners of the SDC-funded Swiss Water and Sanitation Consortium have piloted innovative approaches, exchanged experiences and documented good practices —including the Blue School concept in more than 200 schools in Bangladesh, Benin, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Nepal, and Nicaragua.