



“Water Safety Plans in Pictures”

Give children and local communities the knowledge to improve their own health and well-being

A WECF Initiative

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Why Water Safety Plans?

A Water Safety Plan (WSP) is a tool recommended by e.g. the World Health Organisation to involve local communities in understanding and improving water supply. The WSP is a risk assessment and risk management approach to water supply and sanitation. It can be summarised by the following good-house-keeping rules “spot the hazard, assess the risk and make the change”.

All possible contamination points and potentially contaminating activities in water supply and sanitation are identified and addressed. The final products – maps, reports, posters, safe water strategy – give the local

community information on how to avoid risks of water pollution. WE CF and its partners produce a tool that will enable local communities to climb higher on the water and sanitation ladder

What is our approach?

People all over the world find themselves on different steps of the water and sanitation ladder. However, regardless of the steps they are on, people can improve their own situation through more knowledge. Most water and sanitation projects exclusively focus on the “hardware” such as drilling boreholes and installing latrines. WE CF believes that empowerment of the end-users through knowledge transfer and education, the “software”, is equally important and that both aspects should always be addressed in water and sanitation projects all over the world. After all, unhygienic storage of clean drinking water will still result in bacteriological unsafe water, if the user is not aware of the potential risks.

Who are we doing this for?

Schoolchildren will work for safe drinking water, sanitation and health.

The target groups of WE CF are the people in rural areas in Europe, the forgotten bottom of

the pyramid that has not yet been reached by the Millennium Development Goals. But the concept of “Water Safety Plans in Pictures” will have global applicability for millions of people in rural areas outside Europe. The project will primarily target schoolchildren in European countries that lack adequate water and sanitation facilities. There will be a secondary spin-off target group of teachers, health-workers, parents, and last but not least, local politicians.



Water Safety Plan “Toolbox”

For the development of WSP on a local level, an action plan - toolbox - with several segments will be developed for schools. Segments of the toolbox can be selected and even changed and adopted to the local circumstances and implemented by the schools. For the implementation of the program, the pupils under supervision of the teachers or the local project coordinator, will be the main actors.

The programme will have several outcomes, such as:

- Understanding of the water and sanitation facilities in their community
- Identification of the health risks of water pollution
- Regular monitoring of drinking water quality
- Registration of the seasonal fluctuations of nitrate concentrations in the water
- Assessment and mapping the risks of drinking water pollution
- Providing information about the state of water and sanitation facilities in the community on local, regional and national level
- Awareness rising among children and citizens through active participation.
- Cooperation and capacity building of stakeholders
- Strengthening the demand for active water protection measures and better sanitation systems on local, regional and national level

The results of the program can be used for advocacy for the right to information and access to safe water and sanitation



What is the next step?

Water Safety Plans have the full attention of both WHO and the European Commission. However, both institutions focus mostly on centralised drinking water facilities. WECF has participatory projects in the region of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, where we work together with schoolchildren. Educational material on Water Safety Plans is the next logical step in this process. WECF will, together with Kiwa Water Research, produce Water Safety Plans that have global applicability. Concepts will be developed in three different WECF focus areas Romania, Ukraine, and Bulgaria. Next the concepts will be applied and tested in practical situations in other regions in order to judge universal applicability.

A partner of WECF, TECHNEAU*, has indicated that they are interested to carry out testing in locations in South-Africa and the Baltic States (e.g. Lithuania). Where possible TECHNEAU will try and complement these test studies with epidemiological studies to quantify the impact of this intervention on children's health**.

*TECHNEAU technology enabled universal access to safe drinking water a FP6 project coordinated by Kiwa Water Research.

** Link with WHO CEHAPE programme Children's health and environment programme

Interested?

Are you enthusiastic about this WECF initiative? Would you like to get involved or are you interested to support this initiative? Please contact:

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