

Integrating Gender and Nutrition within Agricultural Extension Services

Activity Sheet
May 2018

The Cost of Clean Water

Time:

70 minutes

Materials Needed:

- A pitcher filled with water
- One empty bucket
- Measuring cup for liquids
- Flipchart
- A measuring cup for liquids

Introduction

Clean water is essential for human life. Without access to clean water it can leave households and populations struggling with diseases. According to the World Health Organization, 844 million people around the world still lack basic drinking water service and 263 million are left spending over 30 minutes per round trip to collect water from an improved source, most living in rural areas.¹ The lack of clean water disproportionately affects women and girls more than men and boys in that girls and women are often the ones within a household having to make the trips to the water source. By raising awareness about the cost of clean water, particularly the burden of fetching water by women and girls, extension providers can promote the proper hand-washing practices as well as address the disproportionate toll of fetching water on household members, and find solutions with community members to reduce the cost of water on certain members of the household.

Objectives

- ✓ To demonstrate the proper way to wash one's hands.
- ✓ To calculate the amount of water needed for a family to wash hands and the potential barriers it creates.
- ✓ To examine the implications fetching water has on women and girls

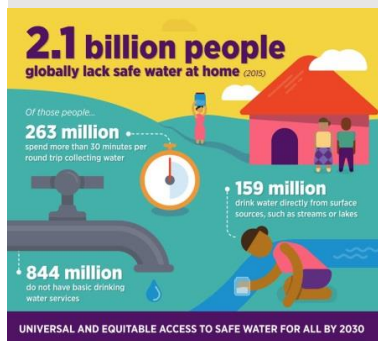
Steps

- 1) Review title of activity, objectives, and brief introduction. **(5 min)**
- 2) Ask participants how much water is appropriate to wash hands thoroughly. Ask for a volunteer to demonstrate the proper handwashing techniques by washing their hands with the water from the pitcher while capturing the fallen water in the bucket. If the facilitator cannot get a bucket or pitcher, then estimate an amount that the entire group agrees is appropriate (*roughly 500 mL of water should be used for this demonstration*). **(5 min)**
- 3) Once an amount has been established, complete the table (Appendix A) to estimate how much water would be needed for a family of 6 (two adults, two children over 5, and two children under 2) to wash their hands at all critical points. The exact number is not important, but it should get the group discussing the critical points of handwashing for the various ages. **(10 min)**
- 4) Once the group sums a TOTAL in the far right column 'Total number of times each day', multiply this by the agreed upon amount of water needed for washing hands (500mL). See below for example. **(10 min)**

Estimated amount of water needed to properly wash hands: 500 mL

Total amount of times the family of 6 washes their hands in one day: 24

Total amount of water needed for a family of 6 for hand-washing in one day: 12,000 mL



WHO and UNICEF
infographic²



Children washing hands at school (Photo credit: Elizabeth Wood)

- 5) After the total amount of water needed for one household of 6 is established, discuss the ramifications of collecting that amount of water daily. Expand discussion about the importance of treating (boiling) water before use if the source of water is from an unprotected ditch or canal. Include in the discussion the other uses of clean water (i.e., cooking with water, making tea or drinking, bathing) and how that contributes to the burden of fetching water, especially by women and girls. Capture responses on flipchart. **(10 min)**

Now what?

Putting the activity into practice **(30 min)**.

Ask participant to discuss in their small groups the following questions:

Does this seem like a lot of water? A little?

Is this another trip to the ditch or well? Who in the family would normally be responsible for gathering the water? Will fetching involve a young girl or boy?

Discuss the potential impact another trip gathering water would have on a young girl or boy. Would this cause them to miss school? This activity is meant to show how one handwashing intervention may cause a cascading effect for other members of the household, particularly females.

What do you think are some of the barriers to collecting water? Who do you think it impacts the most?

What can you do in your roles to reduce these barriers while promoting proper hand-washing practices in the households?

At the end ask participants how they see themselves using this activity in the field by responding to the following questions, ensuring that every group member has the opportunity to provide his or her response.

*As the trainer, in what **ways** and with what **audiences** could you implement this activity?*

*What **changes** might you need to make to the activity?*

Ask each small group to share one idea from their discussion with the whole group.

References:

1. *Progress on Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: 2017 Update and SDG Baselines*. World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2017. www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/jmp-2017/en/
2. World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). *Universal and equitable access to safe water for all by 2030*. Infographic. 2017. *Water sanitation and hygiene*, www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/jmp-2017/en/



Designed to be shared.

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Photo Credit: Elizabeth Wood

Appendix A:

Table 1: Calculating how many times it takes to wash hands

	Number of times a day for each person	Number of family members	Total number of times each day
After defecation			
After cleaning a small child after defecating			
Before preparing food or cooking			
Before eating			
After touching/handling livestock (small or large)			
TOTAL			