

# DROPS OF KNOWLEDGE FOR RIVERS OF CHANGE



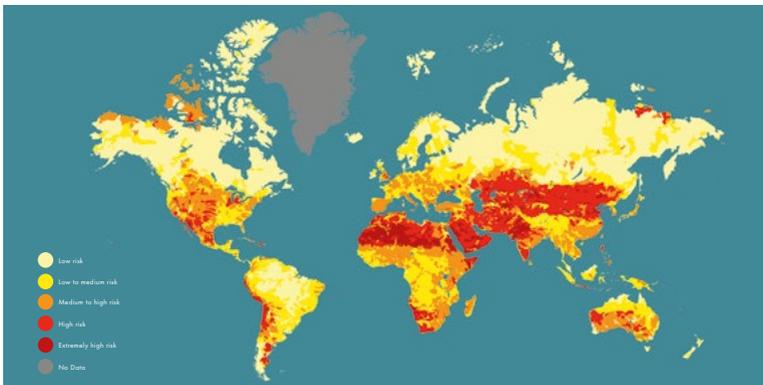
GLOBAL TEACHING  
AND LEARNING MATERIAL

A hands-on guide to teaching  
and learning about  
water, sanitation, hygiene,  
and the environment

SWAROVSKI  
WATERSCHOOL

## ACTIVITY 4.1: IS THERE ENOUGH WATER TO GO AROUND?

When access to water is limited, interpersonal communication, compromise, and understanding are critically important. When people are faced with limited supplies of this essential resource, the question of control will invariably surface. Who is allocating the water? Who owns the rights to the water? If someone owns the land over groundwater or adjacent to water in rivers and lakes, do they own the water? This activity is designed to encourage students to vicariously experience water shortages and find ways to work among themselves to share water equally.



Source: <http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/scarcity.shtml>

**Time:** 30 minutes, on 2 consecutive days / **Thematic Areas:** Social Studies, Life Skills / **Goal for Learning:** Students will be able to understand the concepts of water shortages and cooperation.



**Materials:** ☐ 1 jug of water / ☐ Paper cups or glasses (1 per student)

### ACTIVITY STEPS:

- 1 Ask the students not to drink any water early in the day, and if it is possible, go outside or do some physical movement before you begin the activity. Even two or three minutes of running in place or jumping will build up thirst.

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- 2 Make sure that the amount of water in the jug will not be enough to serve everyone in the room. Give each student a cup and begin to pass the jug of water around so each person can pour some into her or his cup and take a drink.
- 3 Pay close attention to the facial expressions and remarks made by the students who do not get a drink. Engage all of the students in a discussion about how this situation can be changed. Are some students more cooperative than others? Do the thirsty students appear to be more demanding or more engaged in the process?
- 4 Talk about what is happening and consider if there is always enough water where you live. (Note: In wealthy countries, some weather emergencies/natural disasters can cause water and power outages that create temporary scarcity of water.)
- 5 Ask students how they cope when water is limited. Can they understand the need to restrict water use in some places so that there will be enough to go around?
- 6 The next day, repeat Steps 1–3 and begin by passing the water jug to the students who did not get any water the day before. Do they approach the process differently? Now that they have experienced the shortage, will they try to gauge their water use so that there will be enough to go around?

### OBSERVATION AND DISCUSSION:

Ask the students who do not get any water to talk about what it felt like to be left out. Did they have the same understanding of the situation before the activity?

Ask all of the students how they feel about the person who was supplying the water to others but left them feeling thirsty.

## ACTIVITY 4.1



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

CELF, "The Weight of Water." Chappaqua, New York: Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation, 2014. Available at: <http://www.celfeducation.org/Websites/celf/images/The%20Weight%20of%20Water%20.pdf>

Goodman, Donna, Every Body Counts, Every Drop Matters, New York: United Nations Department of Public Information, 2003, p. 68

New York City Department of Environmental Protection, "Environmental Education," [www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/environmental\\_education/index.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/environmental_education/index.shtml)

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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