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Press release for SIWI

Stockholm, the 29th of August 2018

In the framework of the World Water Week, the Swiss Water & Sanitation Consortium launched the Blue Schools Kit today in Stockholm. The Kit supports education authorities and teachers to include environmental education in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goal for Clean Water & Sanitation. Blue Schools aims to inspire students to be change agents in their communities and promotes the next generation of champions in the water and environment sectors.

Building on Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) interventions in schools, a Blue School exposes students to environmentally-friendly technologies and practices that promote sustainable watershed and land management. It promotes a school garden as a practical place to demonstrate the relationship between food production and an efficient management of water. The concept considers that children are the leaders of tomorrow and key change agents in their communities.

In a Blue School:

- Students have access to **safe drinking water, use well-maintained latrines, maintain good hygiene practices** and **participate in gardening activities** and solid **waste separation and collection**.
- Students practice **sustainable land and water management practices** through the school garden and the other environmentally-friendly technologies or practices in the schoolyard or in nearby locations.
- Teachers enrich the theoretical lessons from the existing national curriculum on biology, chemistry, agriculture, etc. with practical exercises so that **students can learn by doing**.
- Students encounter, in a visual and fun way, **concepts** beyond WASH, such as watershed, water cycle and solid waste reduction, reuse and recycling.

Project teams, education authorities and school stakeholders expressed their need for more examples of practical exercises that could complement the national curriculum as well as examples of environmentally-friendly technologies and practices that can be demonstrated in a school yard and replicated at home or in the community. These insights led to further develop the Blue School concept, including support materials in the form of the “Blue Schools Kit”.

The “**Blue Schools Kit**” is neither a new curriculum, nor intended to add to the current workload of teachers. It provides ideas to project staff, education authorities and school stakeholders on how to transform a school into a Blue School. More specifically, it contains a number of materials that have different target audiences and different purposes, including a Concept Brief, a Catalogue of Technologies, a Catalogue of Practical Exercises, and a Facilitator’s Guide for teachers.

By using safe and improved WASH facilities and experiencing good land and water management practices, students are more likely to adopt healthy and environmentally-friendly behaviours in school and at home.

*The Blue School concept was pioneered in 2007 by the **International Rainwater Harvesting Alliance (IRHA)** and the **Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)**. Under the aegis of the **Swiss Water and Sanitation Consortium**, Blue Schools has been implemented in over 200 schools in Bangladesh, Benin, Ethiopia, Madagascar, and Nepal since 2011. The Blue Schools Kit is a result of a joint effort of Consortium members of Caritas Switzerland, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, Terre des hommes – Helping children worldwide, and The Swiss Federal Institute for Aquatic Science and Research (Eawag).*



More information : <http://waterconsortium.ch/blueschool/>

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