



Green Cross launches hygiene training in Ghana to mark Global Handwashing Day

14 October, 2011/Makango, Geneva: Green Cross International is marking Global Handwashing Day, held on 15 October, by helping hundreds of students in Ghana learn how to practice safe hygiene and, in turn, protect their health.

Green Cross's school-based programme, being launched for the first time in the remote Northern Region town of Makango, is part of the network's [Smart Water for Green Schools](#) initiative, which is providing safe drinking water to tens of thousands of people in communities across the African nation of Ghana. Along with the hygiene education programme there will also be the launch of a new mechanized borehole to provide water to the rural community.

"By teaching children the basics in hygiene and sanitation, we are able to protect their health," says Mubarick Masawudu, President of Green Cross's national organization in Ghana. "Diarrhea, respiratory infections and other water-borne diseases can be prevented by the practice of good hygiene and sanitation."

In Ghana, diarrhea is responsible for 25% of deaths for children aged under five and ranks in the top reported causes of illness. Each year, children aged under five typically suffer from three to five episodes of diarrhea and a similar number of respiratory infections. Nine million episodes of disease could be prevented each year by washing hands with soap.

Safe drinking water and hygiene practices are keys to preventing such illnesses. At least 16 communities across Ghana now have access to safe water to around 26,000 people as a result of the Green Cross network's Smart Water for Green Schools programme that was launched last year. The programme is building water systems in at least six more villages in Ghana's Volta Region. Some communities, such as Makango, have also had latrines and educational materials provided as part of the programme.

"The Smart Water for Green Schools programme has already made a real difference to people's lives by securing water in their communities," says Marie-Laure Vercambre, Green Cross International's Water Programme Director. "We are marking Global Handwashing Day by launching educational materials for schools that respond directly to the hygiene challenge."

Green Cross is equipping teachers with materials to educate children on the benefits of sanitation, washing hands and making water safe for drinking.

The Smart Water for Green Schools initiative has had other positive spin-offs. By locating water systems in communities and installing latrines in schools, student enrollment, particularly of girls, has risen sharply since children now have access to improved facilities and can collect water for their families closer to home. They no longer must walk long distances to fetch water which previously often led to them being unable to attend class.

Green Cross International, founded by Mikhail Gorbachev, is an independent non-profit and nongovernmental organization working to address the inter-connected global challenges of security, poverty eradication and environmental degradation through a combination of high-level advocacy and local projects. GCI is headquartered in Geneva and has a growing network of national organizations in over 30 countries.

Related materials:

Videos:

Smart Water for Green Schools project in Ghana:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/GreenCrossInt#p/u/4/uuV2qvm8dE>

Rainwater harvesting system in Ghana sponsored by Pureology:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/GreenCrossInt#p/u/3/kuMDouNbbSc>

Smart Water for Green Schools in Ghana (English and French):

<http://www.gci.ch/en/what-we-do/conflict-prevention/water/our-projects/swgs>

Global Handwashing Day website: <http://www.globalhandwashingday.org/>

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