

Case Study:

Global Handwashing Day in Kenya and the UK: The OMEP Preschool Partnership Initiative

The *Kenyan Rural School Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)* project is fully committed to *Wash from the Start*. The project has been funded since 2009 and has already reached over 10,625 pupils in 31 schools in the Rift Valley, Coast, Central and Eastern provinces of Kenya. Funded by the Salvation Army in Switzerland, Austria & Hungary and Sweden and Latvia Territories, the project has employed 7 full time staff in Kenya. In addition to providing improved water supplies and sanitation facilities the project has provided curriculum support for children from age 4 years and upwards. A major aim of the project has been to build the capacity of the school community to promote hygiene through hygiene education and from its first inception the project has focused attention upon the importance of children as agents of change, and upon hygiene promotion and outreach to the wider community. The project provides:

- Rainwater harvesting tanks & related accessories.
- In a limited number of high priority cases a bore-hole
- Improved classroom roofs where rusting contaminates rainwater.
- Communities with support in constructing ventilated improved (VIP) latrines.
- Hand washing facilities and related hygiene education and training.
- Clean water containers for drinking water storage.
- Training to pupils, teachers and parents on maintenance of all these facilities.

The success of these efforts has been considerable although there remain many challenges. Despite the provisions there remain periods of water shortage due to drought, and while children are now fully aware of the importance of wearing shoes when visiting the latrines, footwear remains unavailable for about one in ten of the children. Half of these children borrow shoes from their friends when they visit the toilet facilities. Despite these limitations the children have generally expressed enthusiasm for the hygiene promotions and they have contributed towards improvements in the hand washing practices and facilities at home.

On the 15th October 2012 one of the Kenyan WASH project preschool classes shared their celebration of Global Handwashing Day with their OMEP partner preschool in Dorchester in the UK. The activities were co-ordinated between Kangoro preschool in Meru in the Eastern Province of Kenya and The Grove Preschool in Dorchester, England. Photographs and videos were taken and exchanged between the partners during these activities and these are continuing to stimulate regular communications between the children, their families and teachers. The preschool partners were brought together through a World OMEP initiative focused on efforts to provide *Education for Sustainable Development in Early Childhood (ESDEC)*. The overall aim of these partnerships has been to provide mutual support:

- *Sustaining and developing their preschool provisions;*
- *Developing their global ESD resources and curriculum;*
- *Sharing knowledge and ideas;*
- *Listening and Learning;*
- *Fund raising (when appropriate) for social justice rather than charity.*

The Grove preschool, and many of the other preschools engaged in the OMEP Kenya/UK preschool partnerships have achieved level 1 of the UNICEF Rights Respecting Award in recognition of the work that they have carried out in ensuring that:

- *All sections of their school community had learnt about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC);*

- They had developed a 'Rights Respecting' ethos;
- These values underpinned all aspects of their leadership and management;
- The children were being empowered to become active global citizens.

Global Handwashing Day

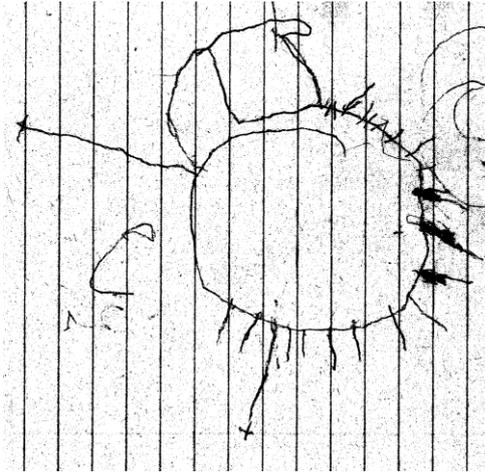
At Kangoro preschool and at the Grove preschool the children learnt about a Princess who didn't want to wash her hands...until she saw just how horrible germs were.



The children all drew their own pictures of horrible germs and drew posters to show the difference between clean and dirty hands.



Mawende's picture of and 'ugly bug' (germ)



Singing the 'Wash your hands' song at Kangoro and Grove



- Open Box -

The song

(sung to the tune of the old English classic: "Knees up Mother Brown")

wash your dirty hands, (Sung as the children practice washing their hands well)

wash your dirty hands,

with a rub rub rub

and a scrub scrub scrub,

wash those dirty hands!

...CLEAN! (The children call out as they hold up their hands to show how clean they are)

- **Close box** -

The children at the Grove Preschool often get muddy and they need to wash their hands a lot.



The teachers at Grove Preschool also used puppets to sing and tell a story about the King of Hearts who wanted jam tarts, and the Queen who said that she would make some. The Queen had to wash her hands before cooking, and the King washed his hands before eating the tart.



- **Open box –**

The Queen of Hearts is a character from Lewis Carol's *Alice in Wonderland* story book. It is also the source of an old English nursery rhyme:

*The Queen of Hearts she made some tarts all on a summer's day;
The Knave of Hearts he stole the tarts and took them clean away.
The King of Hearts called for the tarts and beat the Knave full sore
The Knave of Hearts brought back the tarts and
vowed he'd steal no more.*

- **Close box –**

The children then acted out the story independently.



Practicing hand washing at Kongoro Preschool



In both preschools children, teachers and families have told us that they really enjoying being a part of the celebrations and that they were all looking forward to finding out more about their partner preschool and in providing mutual support.

References

More information regarding the OMEP initiatives on Education for Sustainable Development and the Preschool Partnerships may be found at: <http://www.ecesustainability.org>
For more information regarding the UNICEF Right Respecting Schools Awards (RRSA) see <http://www.rrsa.org.uk>