



children first.

## Keep in Mind

Use the [Volunteer Resources](#) on our website to help further guide your conversations.

# Support UNICEF USA

## Organize a UNICEF USA Water Walk

### What is a Water Walk?

UNICEF USA supporters can host a Water Walk in their community to raise awareness about the impact of the global water crisis, specifically on children. A Water Walk is a great activity for all ages that creates an environment of learning around global water-related issues, and what UNICEF is doing in the area of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).

To plan a Water Walk, volunteers pick a visible spot in their community to walk with heavy buckets of water to experience what millions of mothers and children do each day in walking miles to gather water for their families.

Volunteers can host a Water Walk at any point throughout the year, but can consider hosting one during World Water Month (March), or on World Water Day (March 22) and World Toilet Day (November 19).

### Materials Needed

- Water walk story script
- Clear plastic bottle filled with dirty-looking water
- Buckets or jugs (1 per participant, or per group)
- Some type of weight to reflect weight of water. Examples include weights, rocks or sand.
- Megaphone (optional)
- Hula hoops or cones for obstacles
- Name tags stating girl or boy



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- UNICEF WASH handout (optional)

### Environment Needed

An open space (grass and/or a hard surface) for about 10–20 people to move about comfortably.

### Age Requirement

Elementary school to adult

### Estimated Time

10 minutes prep, 45 minutes activity

# Before You Walk

Before starting the Water Walk, separate participants into groups of 5–6 people. You may have fewer people in each group if you would like; or you can do it all together. Distribute the girl and boy name tags randomly to all participants.

There will be four stops throughout the Water Walk. Either station someone at each stop, or pick a leader in each group to be the narrator of the Water Walk story.

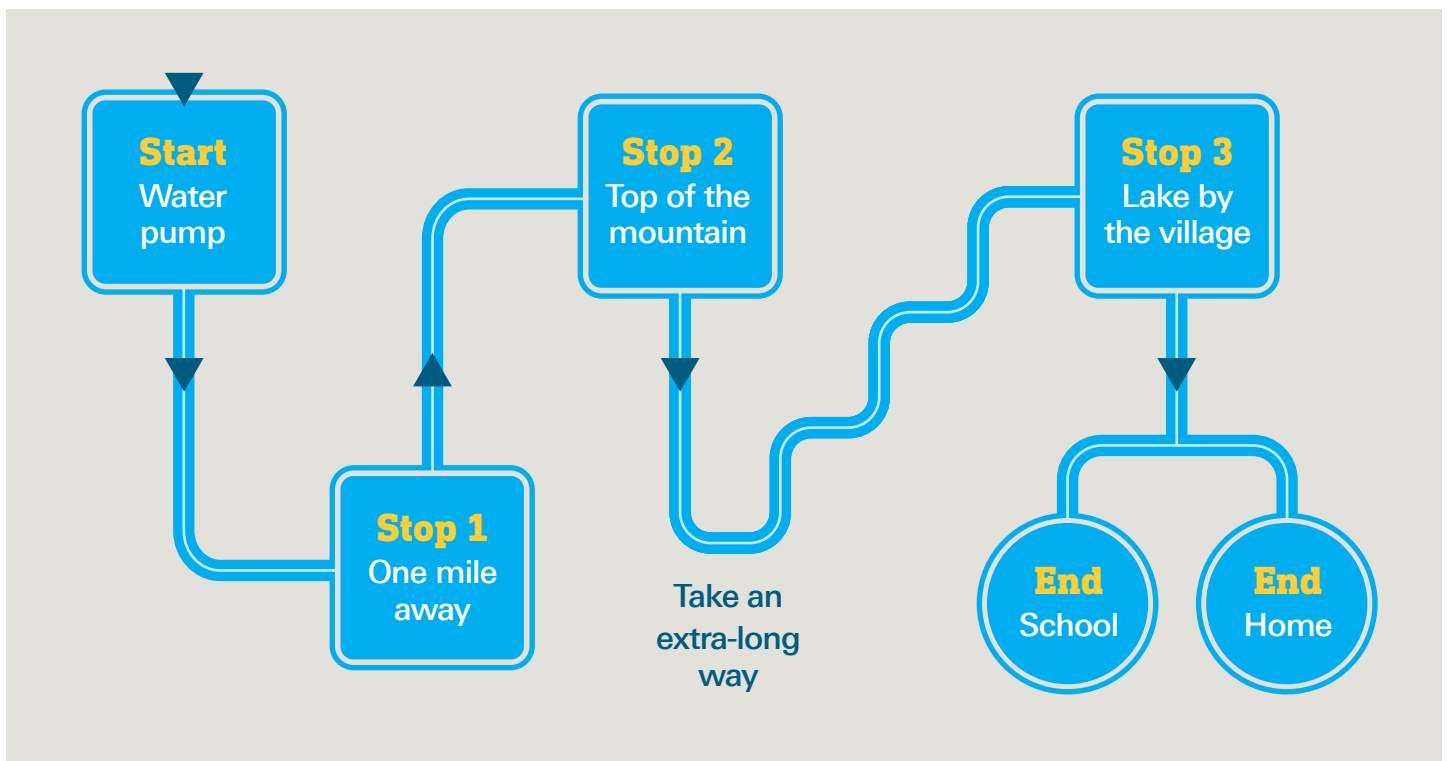
To make sure that everyone has enough space and time to complete each stop, consider staggering the groups. Let the first group complete two stations, before letting the next group begin.



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- When planning your Water Walk, be conscious of participants with disabilities. Be prepared to state additional ways to take action if the ones described below are not inclusive to all participants.

# Water Walk Map



# Water Walk Story

## Beginning

**Starting near a water source, have everyone fill their jug of water.** Congratulations! You have just made it to the nearest water pump and filtration system to your village. You are all children who live in a small village in Nicaragua, where almost one-third of the population in remote areas does not have access to clean water. About 3–4 times a week, you wake up super early in the morning (before the sun comes up!) and walk two and a half miles to this location.

You are already tired and you can feel the sun growing hotter, but you've got to carry the water back to your home in time to make it to school! You've got a long journey ahead of you with lots of obstacles, so you better get going – but be careful! Try not to spill any of the water you collected as you and your family need all of it.

## Stop 1

**Good job! You've made it a whole mile carrying the water you collected.** But the hardest part is ahead of you! You have reached the mountain that separates your village from the water source.

Set your water down and **do 20 mountain climbers.**

You and your friends are going to have to work together to make it over and back down the other side. Be careful not to step on any sharp rocks, and be sure to take a rest when you get to the top! To make sure you don't scrape your feet, you will need to **run with high knees** all the way to the next stop!

(Set up obstacles along the way so that students cannot take a straight path)

## Stop 2

**Welcome to the top of the mountain.** Are you getting tired yet? Unfortunately, you and your friends are running behind. The school warning bells are ringing, which means you have 15 minutes until school starts, but you still have a mile left to go! You want to hurry home so that you don't miss any school, but before you start heading down the mountain, you notice the path you typically take is flooded. Because you want to be extra careful, you and your friends take the long way down to avoid any dangers. Make sure that you don't leave anyone behind!

(Make the group take an extra-long, out-of-the-way path to their next stop)

## Stop 3

Good teamwork — it looks like you all have your water still in your buckets, and you are so close to home. This stop is at the lake that is right by your village. It would have been a lot easier to just get water from this lake instead of walking all the way to the water pump.

But why do you think it's not safe to drink from this lake? (**Hold up a water bottle full of dirty-looking water**)

You're right — it's dirty! And what might happen if you drink dirty water?

Yes, you would get sick! And without clean water, it's very hard to get healthy again.

Unfortunately, the school bell rings again indicating it's starting. Because it is seen as more important that boys go to school, all of the boys must now leave their buckets of water for the girls to take back so that they can hurry to class.

(Boys continue to walk alongside while girls carry the water the rest of the way)

You still have half a mile to go until you get home. Keep going, though; you're almost there!

## End

**Welcome home!** You made the long journey back with your clean water. Now look at how much water you were able to bring back.

This water is going to have to last you *and your family* until your next trip to the water pump: what all do you use water for?

Drinking, cleaning, cooking, washing hands, etc. This is all the water you have — use it wisely and don't waste any of it!

Sadly, the girls did not make it back in time to go to school — maybe tomorrow. But you and your family will be able to eat a hot meal of healthy oatmeal tonight with the water you collected. Good job! Now go get some rest!

800 children will die today  
from water- and sanitation-related  
diseases.



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## What is UNICEF doing?

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) works in 190 countries and territories to put children first. UNICEF has helped save more children’s lives than any other humanitarian organization, by providing health care and immunizations, clean water and sanitation, nutrition, education, emergency relief and more.

Globally, 2.4 billion people lack access to improved sanitation facilities, and 663 million people use unsafe drinking water sources.

Ensuring access to water and sanitation in schools can also help reduce the number of children who miss out on their education – especially girls. Scaling up access to WASH also supports efforts to protect vulnerable children from violence, exploitation and abuse, since women and girls bear the heaviest burden in water collection, often undertaking long, unsafe journeys to collect water.

Today, UNICEF has WASH programs in 107 countries to promote the survival, protection and development of children, and support behavior change around WASH.

For more information, see our Water, Sanitation and Hygiene information sheet on the following page, which can be printed out and distributed (optional). ●

## Water Walk Debrief

- Look at how much water you have now, would that be enough for everything you need?
- How heavy is the bucket or jug?
- How can we help people who need water?
- What if you collected the water from the dirty lake; would that be safe to use? Why?
- What about the boys? Why did they get to go back to school? Was that fair?
- What are some ways that UNICEF is helping children in the area of water?



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# Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

## WASH and Children

Globally, 4.5 billion people lack access to safely managed sanitation and 2.1 billion people lack safe drinking water at home. The lack of these basic necessities isn't just inconvenient — it's lethal.

Over 800 children die every day — about 1 every 2 minutes — from diarrhea due to unsafe drinking water, poor sanitation, or poor hygiene. Suffering and death from diseases like pneumonia, trachoma, scabies, skin and eye infections, cholera and dysentery could be prevented by scaling up access to adequate water supply and sanitation facilities and eliminating open defecation.

Ensuring access to water and sanitation in schools can also help reduce the number of children who miss out on their education — especially girls. Scaling up access to WASH also supports efforts to protect vulnerable children from violence, exploitation and abuse, since women and girls bear the heaviest burden in water collection, often undertaking long, unsafe journeys to collect water.

## UNICEF and WASH

Since 1990, UNICEF and partners have played a key role as 2.6 billion people gained access to safe drinking water. UNICEF programs that started with an emphasis on water supply hardware, such as drilling rigs and hand pumps, have evolved toward a focus on sanitation and the “software” of supporting policy development, building the capacity of institutions and raising awareness about hygiene.



UNICEF has helped increase school enrollment in Malawi through the provision of safe drinking water.

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## About UNICEF

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) works in more than 190 countries and territories to put children first. UNICEF has helped save more children's lives than any other humanitarian organization by providing health care and immunizations, clean water and sanitation, nutrition, education, emergency relief and more. UNICEF USA supports UNICEF's work through fundraising, advocacy and education in the United States. Together, we are working toward the day when no children die from preventable causes and every child has a safe and healthy childhood.

For more information, visit [unicefusa.org](http://unicefusa.org).

Today, UNICEF has WASH programs in 109 countries to promote the survival, protection and development of children and support behavior change around WASH. UNICEF works directly with governments, community based organizations and families to ensure access to clean and secure supplies of water and convenient sanitary facilities. Improving sanitation and hygiene in schools is a core pillar of programs to increase school attendance, and empower children as agents of change in their homes and communities. As the lead emergency agency in the WASH sector, UNICEF offers a core package of water, sanitation and hygiene interventions in times of humanitarian emergency.

## 2016 UNICEF WASH Snapshot

In 2016, UNICEF:

- Invested \$949 million to reach the most vulnerable children and families around the world access WASH.
- Had 660 experts carrying out water, sanitation, and hygiene programs in 109 countries.
- Helped 39 million people gain access to safe drinking water around the world, including nearly 29 million people in emergencies.
- Helped over 17 million people gain access to improved sanitation.
- Provided water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities in 7,100 schools in 71 countries.
- Supported the construction of over 1,600 WASH facilities in health clinics and hospitals.
- Assisted over 14 million people in over 33,000 communities to become certified as open defecation-free. ●

Over 800 children die every day — about 1 every 2 minutes — from diarrhea due to unsafe drinking water, poor sanitation, or poor hygiene.

Community health workers have taught Amnata child health-related interventions, including hand washing and other good hygiene practices.

