Water for Peace

Water is precious.

Everyone, all over the world, needs water.

We need water to drink, to grow food, to clean ourselves, to wash our clothes, to run factories and for so many other things. Clean water is essential for keeping people healthy and reducing the spread of disease. Without access to clean drinking water, communities suffer and become stuck in a cycle of poverty:

People may become sick, or even die, because they don't have enough clean water to drink, and may not have the facilities to wash themselves.

Women and children miss out on job opportunities and school because they have to travel long distances to collect water for their families.

Without water, it is more difficult to farm and grow crops for food.

When communities are struggling to meet their water needs, they aren't able to develop their economies, and people remain poor.

As water is so important, countries can come into conflict over access to water. Countries with reliable rain, with plentiful rivers and lakes, are often richer and more stable, than countries that struggle to meet their water needs. In some places, where neighbouring countries or regions are relying on shared river systems for water, this can sometimes lead to disagreements and even war. As climate change is affecting our weather systems, rainfall has become more unpredictable, with some places experiencing droughts, while others see more storms and flooding – this can lead to further tension as communities have to deal with unpredictable changes in weather.

The United Nations Global Goals are a call to action to end poverty, reduce inequalities, protect the environment and slow down climate change. By working together to support the Global Goals and make sure that everyone has access to clean, safe, drinking water, we can help to reduce these conflicts and make the world a more peaceful and prosperous place for all.

What can we do?

- **Support the Global Goals,** learn about Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, Goal: 14 Life Below Water and Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, and raise awareness about the Goals in your school. Visit *https://worldslargestlesson.globalgoals.org/* to find out more about the Global Goals and how you can help achieve them.

- **Find out about your water – where does it come from?** Where is it treated? And where does it go when you wash it down the sink or flush it down the toilet? Visit *www.water.ie* to find out more about your local water and wastewater treatment plants.

- **Set up a water butt or rainwater harvester** in your school, to collect rainwater to water the school garden. This saves using high-quality treated tap water that takes a lot of energy to produce.

- **Organise a Walk for Water in your school** to raise awareness about the journey that women and children have to make every day to collect drinking water for their families. Visit our website *www.greenschoolsireland.org* for more information.

- **Raise funds for a water related charity** that are providing access to clean water and sanitation where needed.

- **Write to your local government representatives** and ask them what they are doing to protect water quality in your area and meet the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD). Learn more here: *www.catchments.ie/guide-water-framework-directive/*

- **Organise a clean-up project** for rivers, lakes and coastal waters and involve your whole community.

- **Stay informed about water quality in Ireland:** *www.water.ie/help/water-quality/*

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An Taisce

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