



Walking for Water – Guide for Schools



akvo.org
See it happen



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Foreword

Close access to clean water helps reduce poverty, it's as simple as that. Healthy adults and children are better able to work and can spend more time in school, instead of fetching water from far away. Walking for Water is a fundraising and awareness-raising concept where school children aged 10-13 walk 6 kilometres, carrying 6 litres of water in a backpack. That's just under 4 miles, and is the average distance that women and girls in developing countries must walk every day, typically carrying 20 litres of water. By participating in the Walking for Water campaign, kids can learn about global water issues and take action to improve the lives of other kids!

Walking for Water is held each year during **the week of World Water Day March 22nd**. It's a motivating and effective community event to engage the younger generation on a vital topic and teach them that they can make a difference in the lives of others.

The money that the children raise is used to finance water and sanitation projects in developing countries around the world. The kids can follow the project that the school has chosen as part of their schoolwork and online. As a preparation for the walk, guest lecturers educate the children about the importance of clean water and adequate sanitation in developing countries. This preparation builds awareness and gives the children a real sense of purpose for participating in the walk.

Walking for Water launched in the Netherlands ten years ago, and the initiative has outperformed expectations each year since. From just a few hundred Dutch children walking at the first event, 2011 witnessed around 30,000 children from five countries walking for water. We are on our way to growing a growing into a global initiative, but we need your involvement!

The phenomenal success of Walking for Water inspired Aqua for All and partner organisation Akvo to open up the campaign to participating schools outside of the Netherlands. Walking for Water is an initiative that can be replicated by any organisation around the world that wants to host a Walking for Water event. Groups such as NGOs, municipalities, churches or Rotary Clubs can function as a 'Support Centre', and organise events for one or more schools. Just as exciting, the money raised can now be used to fund live projects through our internet partner Akvo.org, with the children following project updates online, direct from the communities they are helping to transform.

We hope you see the simplicity and power of Walking for Water, and we look forward to working with all of you as we bring the global water crisis to life amongst children, their families and their friends, and show this generation that they have the power to make a change. See it happen!

Sjef Ernes, Director Aqua for All



Peter van der Linde, Director Akvo



Introduction

Walking for Water is an annual sponsored event to build awareness and to raise funds to provide more people in the developing world with clean water and proper sanitation, two important factors proven to help reduce poverty. The event takes place each year around World Water Day (22 March). School children aged between 10 and 13 are sponsored by friends and family to walk 6 kilometres with 6 litres of water on their back, as many children in the developing world do on a daily basis. The money that the children raise goes to water projects in developing countries. The walk is also used for educational purposes: drinking water and sanitation are given extra attention in class – including the specific project to be sponsored – both by the teaching staff and guest speakers.

Participating schools will need the coordinating help of a Support Centre (in some cases the school can choose to undertake this role itself).

What is a Support Centre?

A Support Centre is a local or regional organisation that recruits one or more schools to take part in Walking for Water, and coordinates the event locally or regionally. A Support Centre can be formed in several ways. For example:

- **One or more schools** take the initiative to participate in Walking for Water. School officials are responsible for organising the event themselves. They select a project listed on www.Akvo.org/rsr/projects. In this case the school(s) will be it's their own Support Centre.
- A **Rotary Club** or similar community organisation decides to become involved with funding water projects. They recruit schools in the area and select a project from Akvo that suits the Rotary Club and matches the amount of funds participating children are expected to generate. In this case, the Rotary Club becomes the Support Centre to the participating schools.
- A **development organisation** wants to raise funds for one of their own water/sanitation projects (which meet project criteria specified by Akvo). In this case the organisation should contact Akvo (walkingforwater@akvo.org) well in advance to get approval and list the project on the Akvo website. The development organisation can then encourage one or more schools in the region to participate in the Walking for Water campaign. In this case the development organisation becomes the Support Centre to the schools involved. A large development organisation may decide to recruit a substantial number of schools, regionally or nationwide.

In the [Guide for Support Centres](#) you can find guidelines, ideas and tips to help you organize your Walking for Water event.

The following guidelines, ideas and tips may not be applicable to all, but should be able to help your school organise a successful Walking for Water (WfW) event.

The five basic principles of Walking for Water

Who?

Walking for Water is a sponsored walk for school children aged between 10 and 13. The entire school can be involved in the educational aspects of drinking water and sanitation, but only the funds raised by the children from this age group are considered for donation purposes.

What?

The children walk 6 kilometres (4 miles) with 6 litres (1.5 gallons) of water in a backpack - as many children in developing countries do every day. They ask their family, friends and neighbours to sponsor their walk.

When?

Walking for Water takes place every year during the week of World Water Day (22 March).

For what?

Each school can select its own specific drinking water and/or sanitation project which is aimed to assist the poorest of the poor in rural or peri-urban (unplanned urban) areas in the developing world. There are more than 100 water projects to choose from on the Akvo platform (www.akvo.org)

Why?

Walking for Water has two goals: to raise awareness and funds. The event is a powerful means of informing children about the worldwide problems of clean drinking water and adequate sanitation. To reach this goal, a guest speaker must give the children a lesson on this subject. The speaker should be a local water professional (a person who is working in an expert role related to water and / or sanitation). A manual with tips and suggestions is available to support the guest speaker's lesson, ('Why Water').

First things first

Introduction

Your school is thinking about participating or has already decided to take part in a Walking for Water event. You may have been approached by a private foundation or a Rotary Club. Perhaps you would like to do the walk again because you have taken part before or maybe you have heard from other schools that it is a fun educational event. The money raised by your walk will go to a specific project on the Akvo platform.

Projects

There are two options:

1. Your school wants to participate in WfW, but does not have a specific project in mind. In this case, you can select a project from those listed on Akvo.org (www.akvo.org/rsr/projects)
2. Your school has been approached by a development organisation which has a water/sanitation project in mind and you would like to raise money for this particular project. (Please note that the development organisation must liaise with Akvo in advance to get approval to list its project on the platform.)

Akvo

Akvo is a registered non-profit organisation in the Netherlands, backed by the Water and the Foreign Affairs ministries of the Dutch government. Akvo is an online platform that showcases small-scale water and sanitation projects. Akvo is dedicated to addressing water and sanitation problems in developing countries in order to reduce poverty. Every project listed on Akvo has a field partner (doing the work) and is also overseen and monitored to the highest standards by a support partner, which provides on-line updates direct from the field. Akvo's Really Simple reporting system lets local communities and project teams share short text updates, images and movie clips. RSR is an easy and transparent way to track projects in the field on a regular basis. This transparency gives donors confidence as well as connecting them to the people they are helping!

Register

Aqua for All and Akvo would like you to register your event no later than 31 January 2011, so we can keep track of all the Walking for Water initiatives. Please include information on which school(s) are participating, for what project and the amount of funds raised by the children. You can register the walk online using our registration form www.walkingforwater.eu, or by sending an e-mail to walkingforwater@akvo.org.

Preparation

Your school will be organising your WfW event together with your Support Centre (unless you have decided to undertake this role as well). It is entirely up to you how you divide the tasks amongst yourselves, but in order to avoid duplication or gaps, we suggest to make the division of responsibilities clear (who will be doing what) and adhere to proposed timetable at the end of this manual.

The walk

Coordinating a 6 km (4 mile) walk for school children carrying backpacks holding 6 litres (1.5 gallons) of water may sound simple enough... but it actually takes quite a lot of preparation.

Separately or jointly?

When several schools participate, there are a number of options:

- Each school's walk starts and ends at their own school
- Each school starts at their own school but finishes at a communal point
- The schools meet up first and jointly do the walk

The choice is yours and depends largely on the size of your event, the location of the schools and your organisational options.

The route

It is advisable to map out the route well beforehand, and to coordinate the route with local traffic authorities for safety reasons. To make sure it measures 6 km, you could measure it on a map or cycle the route with a bicycle computer or GPS receiver. We also recommend you walk the route yourself to see what it feels like.

Tips

- Do not make the walk too difficult (avoid steep inclines and unpaved roads).
- We advise a circular route (the start will become the finish) and a nice break halfway, if possible offering a soft drink and/or snack. Make sure that there are volunteers to man these areas so that the children don't wander off unsupervised.
- Avoid traffic, busy crossings and major roads. If this is not feasible, make sure you have people directing the traffic. Where possible use walking paths, pavements and minor roads.
- Children will enjoy the walk more if you make it as varied as possible.
- Include an area with lots of people. The walk will get more local attention this way and people will be able to see what the children have to do for the money they collected and to cheer the kids on! Successful areas to pass through have included: care homes, asylum seekers' centres, parks, shopping streets, government offices and buildings of the sponsors.
- If possible, visit a water-related point of interest along the way. Somebody from the water authorities or a parent could tell more about the item.
- Begin and end the walk with a purpose! The start is the place where water is handed out (water supply point – the "source"). The finish is where the water is collected or returned to nature (back to the pond, ditch, flower beds, trees, water barrel, etc). Make sure the start and finish are easily recognisable: school, water tower, pumping station, town hall, etc.
- Make a good map and description of the route so it is clear for everyone exactly where it is. If possible, mark the route with arrows or other signage.

Permits

The local traffic authorities will need to be notified of the event. The walks often require a permit, but sometimes all that is needed is to inform the authorities. Ask well in advance what is needed in your particular area.

Volunteers

Start early with recruiting volunteers – perhaps amongst the support centre staff or parents (in which case the schools will need to be involved).

Volunteers are vital for a trouble free walk:

- They will supervise the children during the walk. We recommend 1 volunteer for every 6 children. The volunteer helps to keep up the pace, can encourage slow walkers or might perhaps carry the

- backpack of tired children for a while.
- The volunteers man the start, finish and rest area. It is important to give the children extra attention during the halfway break and give them something to eat or drink if necessary.
- First aid: we strongly advise having at least one certified First-Aider on the walk. Chances are that one of the parents has a First Aid certificate.

Volunteers can also be used to recruit third party donations, for instance from local shops and other businesses, clubs and churches.

VIPs

Involving a local/regional VIP can be a great way to bring additional excitement to your WfW event. However, VIPs often have a busy diary – approach them well in advance (ideally 4-6 months beforehand). They could be:

- the mayor or other city officials
- local sporting heroes
- director of a water authority or sponsoring company
- other (locally, regionally or nationally) well-known people, for instance artists.

Involving a VIP will give the children a feeling that they are going to do something significant (which they are!) and it attracts more attention from the press. It might be possible to arrange an interview with local radio or TV.

The VIP could also provide a warm-up act, give the starting signal, participate in (even a part of) the walk, give a talk to the children, announce the total amount of money raised etc.

The programme

The core activity of Walking for Water is the walk itself. But it is possible to surround the walk with other interesting and fun events for the children and attract more publicity at the same time.

Some ideas:

- Your school could extend the event by organising extra water or project-related activities on the day of the walk. Perhaps the school, the local authorities or a club can come up with an idea. Perhaps the project for which the money is being raised lends itself to related activities.
- Cooperation with businesses, organisations, retailers and clubs can raise the events to a full day of activities. It probably also increases the amount raised, for instance with matching funds. The volunteers and school children might be given a small gift afterwards, for instance locally sponsored T-shirts, ice creams or other snacks, entrance tickets for a local attraction or water exhibition, etc.
- Other educational / fun additions could be a trip to a water treatment plant or pumping station, an African percussion workshop, a musical performance, a storyteller, a water-related balloon competition etc.

Guest Speaker “Why Water” lesson about Water and Sanitation

Walking for Water is about both learning and taking action. The aim is to make the children more aware of the importance of clean drinking water and good sanitation in developing countries.

Before the walk, most participating schools pay special attention to water-related issues, and this should include a lesson from a guest speaker. The lesson(s) should be held at least 2 weeks, and no more than 4 weeks, before the walk itself. The lesson(s) should include some information about the project for which the children are raising funds. A “Why Water” manual is available with suggestions for the guest speaker’s lesson.

Backpacks

In the Netherlands, all the children receive a blue backpack with the Walking for Water logo. Although the event can also be held with available backpacks, the blue backpack both forms a tangible memory of the event for the children, and helps to produce visually attractive photos of groups of children during the walk. Usually, backpacks can be obtained for a few Euros a piece from a local manufacturer.

Your school's Support Centre should organize these backpacks based on an estimated number of children participating in the walk. The WfW logo is available on www.walkingforwater.eu. Akvo can provide backpacks at cost price, please contact WalkingforWater@akvo.org.



Publicity

The Support Centres are responsible for arranging regional and local publicity, which motivates the children because they see that what they are doing matters!

Recruiting sponsors

Students

The childrens' achievement to be sponsored is clear: walk 6 km with 6 litres of water on your back! But recruiting sponsors can be done in many ways. The most obvious is to ask parents, other family members, neighbours and friends for money – but there are other ways.

The task of the Support Centre is to instruct the schools which have agreed to participate in the walk and to help them get organised. If several schools are co-ordinating a walk together, then you can agree amongst yourselves how to divide the tasks. Please note: the children's fundraising is a mandatory part of the event. We usually assume each child raises an average of € 30 (\$40).

Tips for schools:

- Children should start recruiting sponsors two weeks before the event, preferably right after the guest speaker's water lesson. This way the children are motivated and know why they are collecting money.
- Tell the children the best time to catch potential sponsors at home is during the evening meal.
- Practice with the children what they should say – a good opening sentence is important.
- Let the children take care of handling the money themselves. The children will almost certainly achieve their goal. It also means the children do not have to go back to each sponsor after the walk.
- Give the children an envelope or small bag to collect the money.
- It helps the children if the teacher gives them a target amount. In the Netherlands, € 30 (\$40) per child was more than realistic. This is also close to the cost of a combined drinking water and sanitation installation for one world citizen.

Third party contributions

The money raised by the children can be supplemented with third party contributions, for instance:

- Local clubs (Rotary, Lion etc)
- Local and regional authorities
- Water authorities and water boards
- Local shops and businesses

The day of the walk (on or around 22 March – World Water Day)

6 litres of water

Four plastic soft drink bottles of 1.5 litres each, filled with tap water, make up 6 litres in total. This is the easiest way to measure 6 litres of water and put it into the backpacks (which have been designed to hold 4 bottles). Care should be taken to ensure water is gathered from a sustainable source, especially if the walk is in a region prone to water shortages, and disposed of similarly. Note: it takes thirty children a long time to fill 4 bottles of water. It makes sense to do it the day before – but unless the bottles are then stored in a fridge, the water can no longer be consumed during the walk.



Miscellaneous

Total sum raised

The children should submit their sponsor forms the day before the walk at the latest. The school can then add up how much money the children will collect with the walk. The contact person at the school(s) should deliver the funds raised to the support centre (which can transfer them to Akvo) or directly to Akvo. Appendix A at the end of this manual provides all the details to transfer the funds internationally.

Insurance

If an accident of some kind occurs with the children or teachers during the walk, this should - in principle - be covered by their private insurance rather than the school's insurance. The volunteers should also be covered by their own insurance, both with regard to any injuries they may sustain and their responsibilities during the walk.

However, depending on the jurisdiction, you may wish to take independent legal advice on this matter.

Checklist & Timetable

When	Activity	Support centre	School
Until end December 2011	Your school decides to participate in Walking for Water 2011		
Before 31 Jan 2012	Register the event and the Akvo project your organisation has chosen online www.walkingforwater.eu or by e-mailing walkingforwater@akvo.org Select a date for your schools walk (21-25 March 2011)		
November 2011 to end January 2012	Recruit volunteers to help with organisational aspects		
	Map and test the walking route, write route description		
	Get permits from local authorities as needed		
	Arrange / book guest speakers		
	Recruit volunteers to supervise during the walk		
	Invite VIPs, for instance for opening ceremony		
	Prepare possible extra activities at start and finish		
	Recruit First-Aiders		
February 2012	Guest speaker gives lesson (preferably end of the month, not too far in advance of the event)		
	Discuss raising sponsor money with the children		
	Prepare the walk itself: equipment needed and activity programme for start and finish, arrange for sound systems if necessary, snacks for the children, etc.		
	Collect contact details for publicity, prepare press release		
The week before the walk (week 11: 12-16 March)	Send instructions / route description to all concerned		
	Count (pledged) sponsor money and inform support centre		
	Draw up list of contact details of all organisers, VIPs, performing artists, etc, and distribute		
	Let the children fill their water bottles		
Day of the walk, before the start (Note: ideally the walk should occur during week 12, 19-24 March)	Mark the route with arrows		
	Fit out start and finish areas		
	Install and check sound system if applicable		
	Fit out rest area and prepare snacks/drinks		
	If not done earlier, fill up the water bottles		
	Check if all children have 6 litres of water in their backpack		
	Welcome VIP		
Day of the walk, during the walk	Preparation is key to Making sure everything runs smoothly. Have volunteers check that all children have appropriate clothing and shoes for the walk.		
Day of the walk, after the finish	Discard the water used in a sustainable way		
	Coordinate any additional activities if applicable		
	Announce the total amount of money raised (by VIP if possible)		
April 2012	Transfer money to your Support Centre (local event coordinator)		

	Transfer money to Akvo (specifying the project your school has chosen). See Appendix A for bank account information and instructions for making an international transfer.		
May/June 2012	Follow up: Tell children what has or will be done with the money they raised. Include project updates from Akvo on school website.		

Sponsor form



In the week of World Water day (22nd of March)
 _____ (name student)

Of School _____ in _____

is going to walk 6 km with 6 litres of water in their backpack, just as many children of the same age in developing countries who have to fetch drinking water for their families every day. The amount of money that is raised will go to a drinking water or sanitation project in a developing country. Participate and support this action!

Sponsors

Name	Address	Residence	Amount
		Total	

[Logo school and/or organisation]	
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Appendix A: Organisation Costs

We strive to keep the international coordination, development and promotional and platform maintenance costs to a minimum so that 98% of the funds raised by the children will go to the Water and Sanitation projects chosen by the Support Centre or School.

There are also some costs that need to be covered by the local organisation of a Walking for Water event. Previous experience shows that these costs can usually be easily covered by volunteer contributions and local sponsors.

Transferring the funds the children raised to Akvo

Sending a check through the mail to Akvo in the Netherlands is an expensive way to transfer funds. Dutch banks often charge as much as €65 to cash an international check. Fortunately, there are a couple of easy ways to make a transfer electronically.

Option A - PAYPAL

PayPal is a common and safe means of transferring funds via the internet. This can be done either directly from an existing bank account or, if there is no appropriate bank account to use, one can also pay with a credit card. You do not have to have a bank account to use PayPal to transfer money.

- 1. Go to the Akvo website (www.akvo.org/rsr/project/) and find the project you've chosen to support.**
- 2. Click on the donate button and click on Paypal. Follow the steps indicated.**
- 3. Make the choice of paying directly from a specific bank account. If you do not have a bank account, click on the button that says "I don't have an account". You can the pay with a credit card.**

Option B – International (SEPA) transfer

Funds can also be transferred internationally through your local bank, using the following information:

Name:	Stichting Akvo
Account Number:	333 322 223
Bank name:	Rabobank
Bank city:	The Hague
IBAN:	NL70 RABO 0333322223
SWIFT (BIC):	RABONL2U
Description:	Please include the name & location of your School/Support Centre

If you experience any questions or difficulties, please contact us at info@walkingforwater.org.

Good luck for a safe and successful walk!

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