Session: Local Initiatives

“ACLARA EL AGUA”

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Introduction

The "Aclara el Agua" program is the result of experience acquired during the implementation on the international project called, The Coalition for the Active Cleanup of Water Resources, “CLARA”.

CLARA was the product of the following team:

CLARA’s activities were carried out simultaneously in: Mexico, El Salvador, Venezuela y Panama, under a cooperative agreement during the years 2000 to 2003, and was funded by USAID.
In 2003, CICEANA carried out an analysis and evaluation of CLARA to adapt the program to the local context of Mexico that resulted in the development of the methodology and educational materials for “Aclara el Agua.”
"Aclara el Agua"

It is an education and communication program created as a tool for the formation of youth leaders for the protection and conservation of community water supplies.
“Aclara el Agua” objectives:

- Formation of water conservation and protection activists;
- Promote place-based actions in schools and the community;
- Generate the knowledge and capabilities, and promote attitudes and behaviors that favor the protection of water resources;
- Provide scientific and practical learning experiences necessary for science-based study of environmental problems related to water quality;
- Connect voices, stimulating the interchange of information and experiences among students, organizations, and the public community.
Development of “Aclara el Agua”

The Program is implemented through:

- The selection of an organization or institution that will be the local project leader.

- The training of the local organization and an analysis of the local community’s natural environment.

- The elaboration of a work plan to carry out the project.

- Implementation; this stage initiates with the training of the local trainers in the Aclara el Agua methodology.

- Evaluation of the project.
Components of the Methodology

Water Quality Monitoring and Improvement

Capacity Building of NGOs
Youth and Community Involvement

Environmental Communication Network for Information Dissemination and Exchange
Who are the stakeholders?

**REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**
Presence in the hidrographic region, experience in environmental education related to water

**EDUCATION CENTERS**
Potential leaders in the education system

**YOUTH**
Protagonists in the realization of activities to preserve and improve the quality of water in their community

**COMMUNITY**
Motivated to support and participate in water management

**TEACHERS**
With experience in environmental activities and work with youth

**BUSINESSES**
Interested in the quality of life for the population
Methodology: Seven Steps

1. Field investigation is carried out to determine the ecological conditions of the watershed utilizing a colormetric monitoring kit to identify, among other parameters:

- Dissolved Oxygen (ppm)
- Biological Oxygen Demand (ppm)
- Temperature change
- Phosphates (ppm)
- Turbidity (JTU)
- Fecal Coliform (colonies/100ML)
- pH (units)
- Nitrates (ppm).
Methodology: Seven Steps

2. After analysis of the monitoring results, one environmental problem related to the local watershed is selected as the focus for the program.

3. Local practices and customs related to the selected problem are identified.

4. An action plan is developed to provide solutions for the problem.

5. Implementation of the action plan.

6. A communication strategy is carried out including an water awareness campaign. Information is shared among the participants and public in general.

7. Evaluation and looking toward the future
¿Who were CLARA participants?

- 13 NGO’s coordinated regional efforts and established strategic alliances with government and the private sectors
- 1,644 students and teachers working together for the community,
- 48 schools participated in Panama, El Salvador y Mexico.
¿Who participated in “Aclara el Agua”? 

⇒ Regional NGO 

⇒ 8 high schools 

⇒ 2 community groups
¿Who will participate in the next stage of “Aclara el Agua”?

- The regional NGO, Los Cuartos
- 30 teachers and 900 students in 10 schools found in 3 counties in the state of Aguascalientes
The CLARA and Aclara el Agua projects work to achieve sustainability through the development of the capabilities of the individual.

These projects promote the formation of attributes, from the creation of environmental consciousness to the planning, implementation and communication about environmental responsibility.

Results to date
Examples of results from the CLARA y “Aclara el Agua” Projects:

In the more than 48 participating schools, more than 200 actions were achieved to improve the quality of the local watershed.

For example, in the CLARA State Forum in Michoacan, in the year 2002, 20 schools participated to present their local action plans.
Problema identified:

The results of monitoring of the Cupatitzio River showed a high degree of turbidity and sedimentation due to erosion caused by deforestation.

Local action plan:

• A reforestation plan for the school.
• A media campaign through interviews on the TV program, “Society and Culture.”
• The development and distribution of an interactive CD about water pollution in Uruapan, Michoacan.
Problem identified:

A high number of gastrointestinal illnesses were observed in students due to contamination of school drinking water with fecal coliforms and phosphates. In addition the school lavatories did not offer soap for hand washing.

Local action plan:

Development of school project, “Clean the water and take one pass forward for ecology” which included the following activities:

• Keeping a log book of project progress
Center for Scientific and Technological Studies of Aguascalientes (CECYTEA), San Francisco de los Romo

Local action plan (cont.):

• Research on the number of occurrences of student gastrointestinal illnesses

• Realization of a communication strategy about the project

• Establish a program to wash the school cisterns regularly and to provide quality drinking water in the school water fountains.

• Provide soap for use in school lavatories.

• Initiate a composting program for organic school wastes.
The Tecnological Institute Aguascalientes (ITA)

Problem identified:

Through monitoring activities the water quality was shown to be adequate, however, water usage customs were not.

Local action plan:

- Carry out a communication strategy to sensibilize the community about the importance of improving water usage habits.

- Develop and distribute a manual aimed at reducing water use in the school titled, “Reducing water consumption in the ITA.”
“[We need]... the kind of leadership that doesn’t produce more followers but produces more leaders at all levels of society”.

His Royal Highness William Alexander of The Netherlands

(Inauguration of IV World Water Forum
March 16, 2006)
“Juntos por el cuidado del agua”

GRACIAS...