

Activities of Project SWAN (Safe Water and Nutrition)

KUMIKO TAKANASHI

Scientific Program Manager

International Life Sciences Institute Japan

Center for Health Promotion

(ILSI Japan CHP)

< Summary >

880 million people in the world still do not have access to safe drinking water sources. In many developing countries, the intake of unsafe water and unhygienic environments causes diarrhea and infectious diseases among children. This situation may interfere with the intake of necessary nutrients, resulting in malnutrition.

Water supply facilities have gained attention as an effective way to ensure safe water supplies. However, many issues such as poor operation and maintenance of water supply facilities, absence of Water Management Unions (WMU), and treated water not meeting country or WHO drinking water standards. Sustainable water management programs based on community needs are now seen as an important strategy in addition to water treatment-technical assistance.

In order to ensure safe drinking water in rural and suburban areas where there will be no public water works available in the foreseeable future, Project SWAN aims to establish sustainable water supplies and health communication management models. The goal is to accomplish this through a participatory approach with the inhabitants by 1) enhancing the knowledge and practice of safe drinking water, nutrition, food hygiene and sanitation at the household level, 2) optimizing the operation and maintenance of water treatment facilities to meet Vietnamese standards, 3) establishing effective management systems to sustain safe water supplies and promoting health communication by community-based participatory approaches.

In this article, I would like to introduce the activities and outcomes of Project SIWAN (Safe Water and Nutrition) Phase 1 “Participatory Approach for Contribution to Improvement of Safe Water, Nutrition and Health Environment in Three Rural Communes in Vietnam” which was conducted over 3 years from November 2005 with assistance from the Grassroots Partner Project Fund from the Japan International Cooperation Agency. I would also like to introduce the activities of Project SWAN Phase 2 “Contributions to the improvements of nutritional status and clean water supply through increasing the capacity of local authorities in Vietnam” which began in April 2010.