

11 Student-led hygiene promotion and empowerment in rural schools in the Western Pacific (a photo story)

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Live and Learn Environmental Education (Live & Learn) is locally registered as a non-government organisation in Fiji, Vanuatu, and the Solomon Islands. For the past eleven years, hygiene promotion has been a key focus of our work and during this time we have developed an extensive 'Sustainable Schools Network' through which 700 schools

are participating. The most important aspect of our work is creating a learning process that promotes a shift in hygiene promotion from 'transferring messages and information' to 'creating new knowledge, attitudes and practices through participation and thinking'. Live & Learn promotes an integrated approach to hygiene promotion where students see

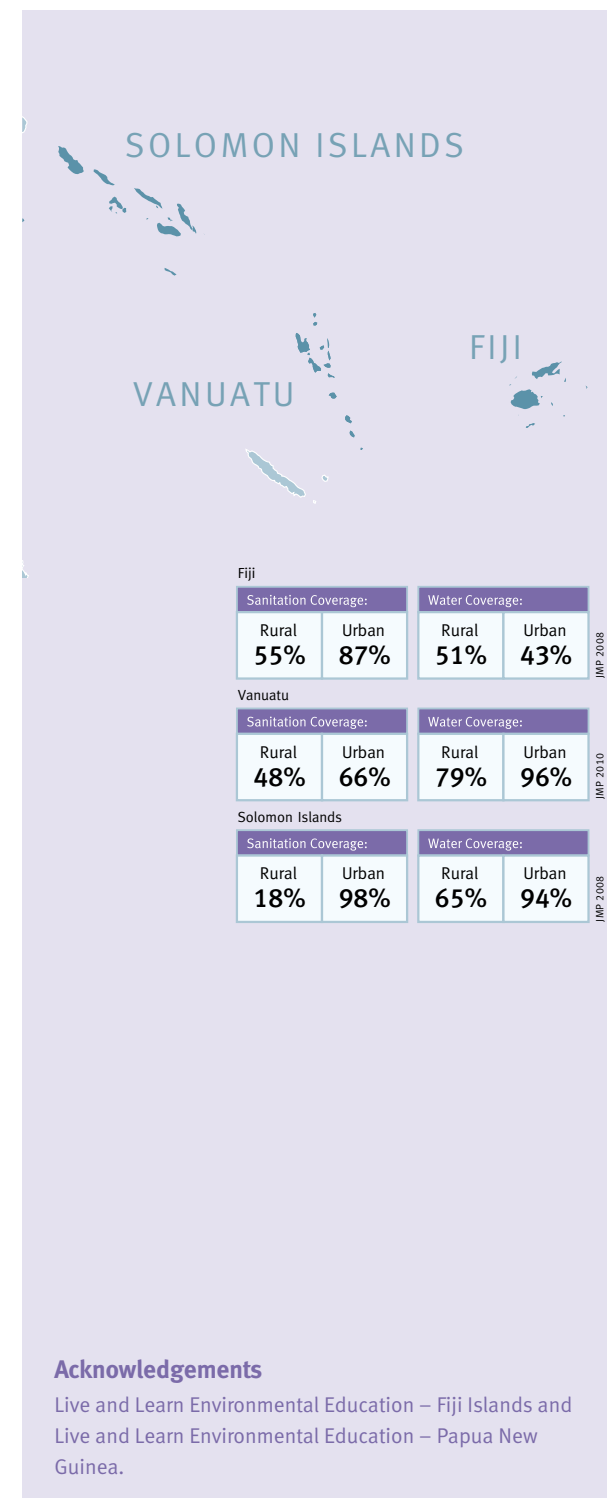
hygiene and health as totally interlinked with other issues in the community.

The photo story describes this approach, starting with a Rapid Assessment of Perception (RAP). The RAP is a participatory research tool that seeks an understanding of how students perceive hygiene in their own village. Findings from the RAP help to inform education content and the approach, and allows students to lead hygiene change. Using the information from the RAP, Live & Learn allows students to lead schools-based hygiene projects. Live & Learn's approach challenges conventional learning where children commit information to memory so thoroughly that they can recall facts almost instantly when given the right stimulus cue (like an exam), whether or not they understand them, or can process, apply or extend them. Learning by doing strengthens confidence and empowers. The purpose of hygiene education is to strengthen knowledge, attitude and practices, and develop young people's capacity to give them confidence to extend and apply their knowledge.



Rapid Assessment of Perceptions (RAP): Students ranking constraints to safe hygiene for the purpose of developing school-based action plans

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Rapid Assessment of Perceptions: Younger students linking their hygiene knowledge to change and action through mapping

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Action planning: Using findings from the RAP to develop local action plans and inspire change at school level

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Teacher training: The RAP provides a foundation to train teachers so that they can support students in taking action to address their concerns

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Project-based action: Action plans leading to the building of twenty handwashing basins in Sigatoka, Fiji

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Public awareness: Students design their own resources for Global Handwashing Day to use for community awareness

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Changing behaviour: Testing soap made through a school project



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Linking with the community: Communities using soap bought from a school-based cooperative. Soap making is now part of the year 7 science project