

Module 1 Global Groundwater Situation

Icebreaker/ exercise Dowsing

Dowsing is an ancient art that is used to identify sources of water.

As an ice-breaker prepare a number of dowsing tools and start exploring the area for water. Divide the participants in different groups and give them 30 minutes to explore the area.

Several instruments can be used:

- a forked stick (in shape of letter Y)
- two hooked rods
- pendulum (a weight on a chain)

Some people also dowse without using a device. In some areas coconuts filled with water are used.

How do you dowse? Walking around with the device – and notice when it starts moving. In case of hooked rods, they will cross when there is a source of water. The forked stick will move up and down. If you want to do some advanced dowsing – you can concentrate on a question (for instance find a source that is less than 50 feet deep – and 'ask' the device to react to your question). It is said that almost everyone has the capacity to dowse.

There is no single explanation for dowsing but it is practiced in many different cultures. References of dowsing come from ancient scripts (Odyssey, Old Testament). Dowsing is used for locating water sources – but also mine deposits or lost objects. In the seventeenth century Queen Elisabeth I of England recruited German dowsers to give training in mine exploration.

Following the exercise:

- compare notes
- discuss the locations the different groups discovered. Can they be explained by the presence of water pipe line for instance?
- discuss dowsing as a traditional form of local groundwater knowledge
- could it also be used not to locate water sources but also map the depletion of it? have people dowse the area after and before a rainfall event?