Section IV: Taking Action

Activity 1: Being a Global Citizen.................................................................p.2
    A few activities are laid out to explore what being a global citizen means and how to do a life-cycle assessment of a product.

Activity 2: Bottled Water: Branding and Marketing A Product.....................p.6
    Students learn to analyze the labels of a product, in this case bottled water, and what lies beneath.

Activity 3: Becoming Changemakers........................................................p.8
    Students are presented with a series of activities to explore a number of ways to take action on issues they are passionate about.

These lessons are designed to support high school teachers in integrating water issues into their curriculum. This resource was written by Polaris Institute project staff member, Daniel Cayley-Daoust as a part of the Gr.10 Civics and Citizenship resource entitled Water Perspectives: Conflict and Action. Expertise and advice was provided by a local steering committee and volunteer resource reviewers. Special thanks to the following individuals for their support in making this resource possible: Rebecca McQuaid, Andy Kerr, Susan Brandum, Patricia Larkin (Nature Works Learning) and Paul Baines. Thanks to everyone else not named here, who have been supportive of this initiative.

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A French translation of this resource will be made available.

The Polaris Institute is an Ottawa-based non-governmental organization that has been in existence since 1997. Our main goal is to enable citizen movements to develop new methods, strategies and tools in order to bring about democratic social change. As a result, most of our past educational work has focused on helping students to develop the critical thinking and leadership skills necessary to bring about on-the-ground action.

We welcome any and all feedback on this educational resource.

For more information or to contact us, visit: www.polarisinstitute.org/education
Activity 1 - Being A Global Citizen

Learning Goals: Understand what being a “global citizen” means and the concept of a life-cycle analysis.

Curriculum Outcomes Targeted (Gr 10 Civics and Citizenship, 2013)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand A – Political Inquiry and Skill Development</th>
<th>Strand B – Civic Awareness</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A1. Political Inquiry:</strong> use the political inquiry process and the concepts of political thinking when investigating issues, events, and developments of civic importance</td>
<td><strong>B1. Civic Issues, Democratic Values:</strong> describe beliefs and values associated with democratic citizenship in Canada, and explain how they are related to civic action and to one’s position on civic issues</td>
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<td><strong>A1.2</strong> select and organize relevant evidence, data, and information on issues, events, and/or developments of civic importance from a variety of primary and secondary sources, ensuring that their sources reflect multiple perspectives</td>
<td><strong>B1.1</strong> describe some civic issues of local, national, and/or global significance</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B1.3</strong> explain why it is important for people to engage in civic action, and identify various reasons why individuals and groups engage in such action</td>
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Description: Class will explore the concepts of global citizenship and life-cycle analysis through a series of activities including discussion, screening of the Story of Stuff and through the analysis of the life-cycle of products that they use in their daily lives.

Time Required: Activities #1 & #2 = 15 minutes each; Activities #3 & #4 = 60 minutes each (research required)

Materials & Preparation:

- **Materials:**
  - Video projection equipment and internet (or copy of Story of Stuff) for activity #2.
  - Computer to do the research for #3 and #4, or can be done as homework.
  - Print or project (BLM 4.1) for activities #2 and/or #4
  - Consider purchasing the poster titled “How to Build Global Community” that was created by Syracuse Cultural Workers
- **Activity:**
  - Familiarize yourself with topics and questions to ask students. Teachers should prepare questions before they ask them and project them on a screen for visual learners.
  - Teacher should do activity number 3 to better be able to accompany students.

Teaching Strategy:

4 Parts to this activity

1) **Opening discussion.** Teacher can ask the following questions to assess student knowledge. Writing the answers on the board as they are mentioned can help more visual students follow the conversation better (you can get a student to do this, or teacher can do it).
   - Question 1 – What does “being a global citizen mean”? 
Question 2 – What are the different steps in the “Life Cycle of a product”?

a) Definition of Life-Cycle Assessment (Also known as “cradle-to-grave” analysis):
   “technique to assess environmental impacts associated with all the stages of a product’s life from-crade-to-grave (i.e., from raw material extraction through materials processing, manufacture, distribution, use, repair and maintenance, and disposal or recycling)”

b) See (BLM 4.1) for a Life-Cycle Assessment graphic.

2) **WATCH** the Story of Stuff video (you can easily find it online). Suggest that you collect impressions from students afterwards: what did you learn? What did you already know? What surprised you? Why is it important to understand this?

3) **Short research project:** Members of the Syracuse Cultural Workers drafted the text for a series of great posters including one titled “How to Build Global Community” from which the following quote is taken: “Know where your water comes from and where your wastes go”. Keeping that in mind, **answer the following questions** individually or in small groups. Consulting the internet or other sources of information will probably be necessary to answer questions. **EXECUTION:** You may want to assign this project to small groups of 4 or 5 rather than individuals. Some of this research might require phoning people. You can also make this a class project where discussion happens in a group, and phoning and research is split up into small groups. You could also combine this with activity 4 and give other groups the responsibility of doing a life cycle assessment.

   A. Where does your drinking water come from? (School or home; looking for type of water distribution and source of water)

   B. Where does your wastewater go? (School or home; type of wastewater treatment and source of water it is sent back to)

   C. Where does the water inside bottles or cans of Coca-Cola or Pepsi come from? (look at products in local convenient store or grocery store for examples of sources of water – varies from one product to another)

   D. What can be the consequences of taking large quantities of water from a watershed and exporting it somewhere else as food, bottled water or pop? (Hint: virtual water)

**NOTES FOR TEACHERS**

a) The water will come from either a well or a public water system. Wells will mean it’s a groundwater source of water. Public water system can mean lake, river or groundwater source. In the case of public water systems (likely for a school) you might be able to find out where the water is sourced by looking at info from source protection area relevant to where you are, contacting your conservation authority or contacting your municipality.

b) For residences with wells, wastewater will usually be stored in septic tanks. For public water systems, it’s less certain, but often there will be some sort of waste treatment system and it will then be released in the same water body it was taken from in the first place. Similar to a, contacting municipalities or conservation authorities should yield the information you are looking for.

c) You may be able to find this on the can or by calling the company or by looking at where the closest bottling plant is located. These two companies
use city tap water for soft drinks, so it’s often located in places like Montreal, Mississauga, Vancouver, and Calgary.

d) **Food**: Look at the definition of virtual water.

See: http://www.angelamorelli.com/water/#.UlU7eufwxws.twitter for a great explanation of visible/direct water use VS virtual water for food.

**Bottled water/pop cans**: Regardless of conditions, extracting large quantities of water can have direct impacts on ecosystems and availability of water.

That being said, many local water uses (brushing teeth, toilet, etc.) involve consumption or use and waste disposal within the same watershed, sort of like a water cycle which means that the impact on water is lower than if the water leaves the watershed. Aside from evaporation that can leave the area of interest, the rest of the water should stay in the same watershed.

However, bottling products made from water and selling it outside the watershed will likely mean that the water will return in another watershed instead of its watershed of origin. If large quantities are taken in one watershed and returned to others, it can mean that there will be less water available in the original watershed, putting added pressures on water availability and ecosystems.

In places where water is scarcer, it will be much more noticeable regardless of if the water stays in the same watershed. But bottling plants tend to take many millions of litres of water per day and can affect even watersheds with historically high levels of water after several years.

There is also a big difference between taking groundwater and surface water. Groundwater aquifers can often take years or decades to recharge their water, so the impact of taking water from ground water sources is much greater because it can’t be put back the same way.

Fun fact: 99% of the water in the great lakes is a remnant from glaciers and is not renewable, which makes an interesting case against exporting water in large quantities.

4) Choose one of the following and **do an assessment of its life cycle**. Search the internet for the answers.

- Food (choose a food)
- Plastic water bottles or pop sold in plastic bottles
- Pop sold in aluminum cans
- 100% cotton t-shirt
- Computer
- Car
- Your electricity (choose a type of source of energy)

Questions you need to answer to get the life cycle assessment
1. What are the main resources needed to produce this product? (raw materials, energy)
2. How is it made?
3. How is it transported?
4. From where is it transported?
5. Where do you buy it?
6. How do you dispose of it? (multiple... energy and other resource needs for disposal... transportation)

**EXTRA #1:** Consider asking students, either in relation to water, or generally, to think about what it means to them to be a global citizen and to think globally. Consider getting students to do shorts skits in small groups or to write something down. If you want to expand beyond water, you can also draw inspiration from the Syracuse Cultural Workers poster, “How to Build Global Community”, and assign one of the statements found on that to each group.
(BLM 4.1) – Life Cycle Assessment graphic
Activity 2 - Bottled Water: Branding and Marketing a product

Learning Goals: Learning to interpret product labels including understanding the difference between product brand and companies that manufacture the product.

Curriculum Outcomes Targeted (Gr 10 Civics and Citizenship, 2013)

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<td>C3. Personal Action on Civic Issues:</td>
<td>analyse a civic issue of personal interest and develop a plan of action to address it</td>
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Description: Using bottled water as the main example, in small groups, students will interpret the labels of empty bottles of water from brands that dominate the industry. This activity could also be expanded to other types of products.

Time Required: 30 minutes

Materials & Preparation:

- **Materials:**
  - Teacher must find empty bottles of water: either by asking students to collect from recycling or trash, bring from home, etc. You just need one or two or each brand, but make sure you have enough for all groups (suggested that students be split in groups of about 3 people). Prioritize brands such as Aquafina, Dasani, Pure Life, Evian (try and make sure you have one of each for these four, or three of them). Discourage or try not to “purchase” the bottles of water. Recycle or keep the bottles afterwards.
  - Ability to project the questions on a screen.
  - Ability to show a short video to the classroom.

- **Activity:** Teacher should familiarize themselves with the activity to be able to facilitate the different steps of the activity and the discussion.

Teaching Strategy:

2 parts to the activity:

1) **Product Analysis**
   - Split the class into small groups of 3 people.
   - Provide each group with one empty bottle of water.
   - Ask them to explore and answer the following questions.
     1. What is the brand of this bottled water product?
     2. What company produces this brand of bottled water?
3. Where does the water come from (geographical location)?
4. What aspects or elements of the packaging and physical bottle is used as a marketing strategy?
5. Why are those images, words and colors associated with bottled water?
6. Does the marketing reflect reality? (Is the water pure or purer than tap water? Does it come from the mountain or the city tap? etc.)
7. How does the way they advertise their product make you feel?

- Larger classroom report-back: Depending on the quantity of small groups, go brand by brand and ask each group to answer the questions in an alternating fashion. For the marketing question, ask each group to name 1 or 2 answers. You can also ask students general reflection questions such as, “what did you learn”, “what are some main differences between brands”, “what other products or brands do these companies own”, “What is the implication of the geographical location of this water” (i.e. it comes from far away usually and needs to be trucked to your local store, climate change, etc.)

- NOTE: some types of bottled water don’t indicate where the water is from

- NOTE 2: Marketing facets of a bottle can include color of bottle shape and design of the plastic bottle, slogans, names chosen for the brand, images on the label such as families, glaciers, mountains, or other text on the label.

2) WATCH the short documentary titled: “The Story of Bottled Water” (8 mins)
3) EXTRA: find video ads for bottled water on youtube and analyze the marketing and the values, images and relationships that are associated with the product.
Activity 3 - Becoming Changemakers

Learning Goals: Discover and imagine different ways you can make individual and collective change in society.

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| C1.1 assess the significance, both in Canada and internationally, of the civic contributions of some individuals and organizations |
| C1.2 describe a variety of ways in which they could make a civic contribution at the local, national, and/or global level |
| C1.3 explain how various actions can contribute to the common good at the local, national, and/or global level |
| C3.2 propose different courses of action that could be used to address a specific civic issue |

Description: This series of short activities will allow students to imagine different ways to take action and discover new ways of taking action to create change we want to see in society.

Time Required: 90 minutes (There are many “Extra” activities that will require more time, see below)

Materials & Preparation:

- **Materials:**
  - Print out (BLM 4.2), or ensure you are able to project them on a screen when necessary.
  - For EXTRA #1, have the ability to show videos to the class.
  - For EXTRA #2, have access to the internet and/or books for research; and have materials to make a poster, if that option is chosen.

- **Activity:** Teacher should familiarize themselves with the definitions and examples to be able to answer question to the best of your ability.

Teaching Strategy:

There are four main activities and four EXTRA activities that deepen the learning started by the first four activities.

1. **Activity #1** (15 minutes): Generating ideas: In a large classroom setting (or small groups, then larger group), get students to explore different kinds of actions they can do to promote the right to water, access to water or to take action on other social justice issues they care about. We suggest that you write proposals clearly on the board. (ex: petition for something to present to someone, conference on a theme, workshop, clean up a creek, art show, posters, install a solar panel on school roof, etc.)

   - Aim to have a diversity of options. If examples are too similar, encourage students to think outside the box. Aim for 10-15 ideas before moving on to activity #2.

   1) So you have a proposed outcome, but what are ways you can achieve that? How can you get to the results you want?
2) What if the actions you propose don’t work to influence the stakeholders you wanted to influence and they say no, is there anything else you could do to change things? 
3) So that is an individual action, is there a way you could work in a larger collective setting towards a common goal? 
4) Do we have all the information, support and skills needed to achieve this? How do we get that?

2. **Activity #2** (30 minutes): Go over Actions 1 to 8 in [BLM 4.2](#) and see in which categories all the actions or projects they have imagined fit in the previous activity could fit. (could also be in actions #9-12) – Most likely a large number of ideas will fit in a select number of categories. The idea is to open their minds up to other ways of taking action.

3. **Activity #3** (30 minutes): Now that students are familiar with Actions 1 to 8, in small groups, get students to imagine new ideas for each category. Get students to be as specific as possible with their ideas. Focus on the school or the broader town or other community. You can request that students focus on water related initiatives. Get students to share their examples in the larger group afterwards.
   - **ALTERNATIVE**: Instead of starting with the idea generation activity, you can present each category of action one at a time. After presenting the definition and the examples of the first one, get students, in small groups, to imagine other actions that they could do individually, as a group or as a community. Repeat for each category from 1 to 8.

4. **Activity #4** (15 minutes): Go over Actions 9-12 in [BLM 4.2](#) and explore examples as a group.
   - **EXTRA #1** (10 to 60 minutes): show videos for some of the examples of Actions. After viewing videos, ask students what types of actions fit within each example showed in the video (not just 9-12). Examples of videos that could be used:
     1) [A Force More Powerful](#) (110 mins, 1999)
     2) [As Long as the Rivers Flow: The Story of the Grassy Narrows Blockade](#) (at least 10 mins, 2002-2003, independent)
     3) [Meshkanu: The Long Walk of Elizabeth Penashue](#) (20 mins, 2013, Black Kettle Films)
     4) [February 13 2013 Keystone XL pipeline civil disobedience](#) (4 minutes, 2013, youtube, 350.org)
   - **EXTRA #2** (60 to 120 minutes +, can be homework): get students, individually or in small groups, to select one example that is either listed in action 9 to 12 in [BLM 4.2](#) or that they come up with on their own. Research the example and do a presentation, poster and/or skit (skit needs to stay respectful of other cultures if they choose one of those examples)

5. **EXTRA #3** (15-20 minutes) – Get students to reflect individually on paper, or get students to have a large or small group discussion about how each action type can complement each other, builds upon each other, how alone, each action doesn’t amount to much without the others, and how it can take a wide variety of actions to tackle larger social problems. WATCH: Story of Change [](http://storyofstuff.org/movies/story-of-change/) Questions you could ask include:
   - Do you think that education alone will bring about the change that we need in our society?
• Can you combine different types of actions? How?
• Will each of the types of action have the same effect depending on the objectives, what you want to change? Explain with examples.

6. **EXTRA #4 (30-60 minutes)** – In small groups, get students to imagine a series of actions that could be taken to phase out bottled water sales and purchases within your school, school board or municipality (choose one). After, allow students to compare and combine their “plans” into one in a classroom setting. (Note: 1- You can choose a topic that is different than bottled water, but it should be local and achievable or imaginable; 2- Depending on timing or other considerations, you could choose to take all or parts of the plan of action and get students to start working on it as a class project)
(BLM 4.2) – List of Actions for Change

1. **Education & raising awareness**
   A. **Definition:** Creating or using opportunities to share information and raise individual or collective awareness with the public, your friends, family or colleagues. (Note: never forget that you can also learn from others along the way)
   B. **Examples:**
      - Create posters on various issues and put them up in the hallway of your school
      - Prepare an information table during an event or during lunchtime
      - Organize a public conference or workshop
      - Use street theatre performances to raise awareness
      - Create a social media campaign to raise awareness

2. **Investigation & Research**
   A. **Definition:** This is often an important task to conduct in preparation of any type of action. Investigation and research to advance and develop knowledge around specific issues can also be part of this category.
   B. **Examples:**
      - Investigative journalism
      - Writing an in-depth report
      - Filing access to information requests
      - Research existing information to prepare for an education activity

3. **Skill Building**
   A. **Definition:** Exercises or practice that leads to developing individual or groups capacity and skills. You can also often learn skills through mentorship, training or just plain observation and practice.
   B. **Examples:**
      - Leadership, facilitation or public speaking training
      - Workshop to learn how to do research or how to create neat graphics or posters
      - Civil disobedience training as was repeatedly done in churches during the civil rights movement in the United States
      - Fundraising or outreach training
      - Skill building conference

4. **Community Building**
   A. **Definition:** Any attitude or initiative that leads to strengthening a community and creating a more open (ability to understand differences and to welcome new people) and resilient (ability to face crises) community. Can include education, building relationships, creating common spaces, dealing with conflict, etc.
   B. **Examples:** (See also Syracuse Cultural Workers poster on “How to Build Community” for other ideas to explore with the classroom)
      - Working to resolve a community conflict in a lasting and constructive manner
      - Creating a community group to represent collective interests
      - Holding a street party or building a community garden
      - Welcoming new neighbours and creating relationships with your neighbours
5. **Relationship Building**
   A. **Definition**: The act of creating various kinds of relationships between individuals or groups of individuals. This allows for sharing of information, experience and building overall cohesion within groups or between groups. The more you are comfortable with and trust someone, the easier it will be to collaborate for example. Relationships can reach various levels: acquaintance, neighbor, friend, ally, best of friends, etc. Relationship building can also be about healing relationships that are toxic, making an acquaintance or a friend out of an enemy or a relationship that is normally hostile.
   B. **Examples**:
      - Sharing food or garden tools with your neighbors
      - Organizing a multi-school conference on social justice or the environment to get to know people or groups from other schools
      - Creating a multi-faith community network to bring together communities of different faith groups.
      - Doing an out-of-school activity with school friends that you normally only see at school or inviting some friends to meet your family, to get to know you better
      - Participate in multi-generational activities and learn from your elders and vice-versa (ex: young people interacting and learning from elders, grand-parents, etc.)
      - Organize activities that will foster cultural exchange and developing relationships with first nation communities

6. **Collective Organizing**
   A. **Definition**: Bringing people together to form a group that will represent specific interests or advocate for a specific issue such as weater.
   B. **Examples**:
      - School club
      - Student associations with elected representatives and general assemblies
      - Creating or joining a union to represent workers to fight for better working conditions such as better health and safety practices, fair wages or health coverage
      - Creating a watershed group
      - Create a coalition of community organizations to fight against industrial pollution of water

7. **Legislative Change & Political Campaigns**
   A. **Definition**: Working on a campaign or effort to change laws or policies that affect your lives or issues you care about. This can go from trying to change institutional policy within a school or school board to trying to get the Federal Government to better protect endangered species.
   B. **Examples**:
      - Get your local school, school board, municipality to stop selling bottled water
      - Get the government to invest more into education to reduce the size of classrooms
Demand that the government invest more in renewable energy and stop subsidizing the fossil fuel industry
Demand that the government invest more in First Nation drinking water to ensure that First Nation communities have access to clean drinking water

8. Legal Action
   A. Definition: Using the courts to get justice on specific issues such as human rights issues, corporate crimes or government related issues. There are multiple levels of courts, but most often you will be looking at provincial, federal or supreme courts in Canada. These are often long and expensive processes.
   B. Examples:
      - A group of First Nation communities in Northern Ontario sue the federal government for failing to comply with treaty obligations of providing safe drinking water to their communities.
      - Families from mining impacted communities in Guatemala sue the Canadian company that operates the mine for human rights violations.
      - A group of environmental NGOs sue the federal government for failing to apply laws that are supposed to protect water
      - A municipality sues a private company for responsibility in the explosion and destruction of part of their town after the derailment of one of their trains carrying heavy oil

9. Direct Support to Affected Communities
   A. Definition: Finding ways of supporting or working directly with communities that are affected by industrial or resource extraction projects, or by industrial catastrophes (ex: oil or chemical spill). This can be done by directly going to those communities or from a distance, but is always done in partnership and according to the priorities set out by those communities. Affected communities are most often indigenous communities because resource extraction projects are often located in more remote areas where mainly indigenous people live.
   B. Examples:
      - Accompaniment in southern communities that face violent repression of organized resistance (ex: Quebec-Guatemala Accompaniment Project that accompanies mainly leaders from communities affected by mining that don’t want mining and where the presence of foreigners as observers deters police and local company security from being violent with the community.)
      - Fundraising to allow leaders from communities opposing extraction projects to share their story outside of their community OR for legal fees to try and bring their case to national or international tribunals.
      - Making a video documentary in partnerships with local communities to document stories of resistance that are made invisible
      - Fighting to stop new pipeline projects linked to the tar sands at the request of indigenous communities that are being destroyed by the rapid expansion of the industry in Northern Alberta.

10. Building Alternatives
A. **Definition:** Any initiative or project that aims to build and propose alternatives to current social problems and social systems that can be problematic such as our dependency to fossil fuels, industrial food systems, etc.

B. **Examples:**
   - Developing local farmers networks to encourage local alternatives for our food needs instead of relying on industrial options that come from far away
   - Working to install community run windmills and solar panels on public buildings to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels
   - Preserve and create more green spaces to reduce our impact on water and restore ecosystems.
   - Encourage the proper maintenance and construction of publicly-owned water treatment and distribution systems.

11. **Civil Disobedience**

   A. **Definition:** The active, professed refusal to obey certain laws, demands, or commands of a government, or of an occupying international power, with a sense to directly challenge those laws or to change specific laws or policies. The objective is to demonstrate that policies, decisions or laws are unjust and need to be changed.

   B. **Examples:**
      - Doing a sit-in in an explicitly unauthorized location to protest laws around climate change, as was the case with some of the protests against the Keystone XL pipeline in the US
      - 1989 Cape Town Peace March in South Africa was a large protest held in defiance of State of Emergency conditions and apartheid laws that enforced racial segregation.
      - Rosa Parks and other African American activists sitting in “white-only” buses during the civil rights movements in the US
      - In 2013, student protesters and residents of Montreal and surrounding regions organized a large march and protest in defiance of city by-laws that prohibited marches and political gatherings that were unsanctioned by police.

12. **Direct Action**

   A. **Definition:** When a group of people take an action which is intended to reveal an existing problem, highlight an alternative, or demonstrate a possible solution to a social issue. Contrary to indirect action or civil disobedience, direct action yields immediate results and does not appeal specifically to a political intermediary to make political changes, but rather highlights proposed changes through their action. Direct action places the moral conscience above official laws. (Can be an act of civil disobedience, but the contrary is not always true)

   B. **Examples:**
      - In Detroit in 2014, a group of individuals, including clergy members, blocked the entrance to a corporation that was hired by the city of Detroit to shut off access to water to residents who had fallen behind on paying their water bills.
      - Building a garden over pavement (ex: street or parking lot)
• Landless peasant movement in Brazil, mostly peasants that were displaced and had no land, who have would occupy unused lands by large landowners and using them to grow food, feed themselves and build homes.

• Elsipogtog First Nation (Mi’kmaq) erects a blockade to prevent a natural gas fracking company from digging wells and conducting tests because of the lack of consultation with their people and of fears for that it would contaminate the water.

• 1999-2000 protests and occupation in Cochabamba, Bolivia to protest the privatization of water and rising cost of water.