

Water Changes Everything

World Water Day is 22 March. This video explores the global water crisis, and how we can help everybody gain access to safe drinking water.

Before you watch

Match the words with the definitions.

to be burdened with	the condition of being poor
contaminated	the thing you turn on to get water from a pipe
poverty	an area of land covered by water where trees and plants grow
vast	to be unprotected from
to restore	to carry something heavy
a faucet	dirty, polluted and unsafe for people to use
to be exposed to	to give something back that was taken away before
a swamp	extremely large

Transcript

Water. It's life's most basic need. But there's a water crisis in our world right now. Seriously, a crisis. Nearly one billion people live without clean drinking water. It's happening all over the world, especially in developing areas of Sub-Saharan Africa, South-East Asia and Latin America. It's a water crisis because it starts with water. But water affects everything – education, health, poverty, and especially women and children.

Let's look at a family caught in the water crisis. It's likely they live on less than a dollar a day. When they're thirsty they can't just turn on the faucet for a nice, cold glass of water – they don't have a faucet. Instead, the women and children go off to collect water. Many walk up to three hours a day to the nearest swamp, pond or river to gather water that's been sitting out in the open – exposed to all kinds of germs.

Time spent gathering water is time they can't spend learning to read, write, earn an income or take care of their family. Some women in Sub-Saharan Africa spend more time collecting water than any other activity they do in the day. And the walk isn't just hard, it's dangerous. The women are alone and burdened with 40 pounds [18 kg] of water. Many get hurt, sometimes they're even attacked. When they make it home, the little water they've collected isn't clean. Some families know their water is contaminated with germs that cause diarrhoea, dehydration,

even death – but what choice do they have? Kids, especially babies, are affected most by these germs. About every 19 seconds, a mother loses one of her children to a water-related illness. And each day, almost a billion people are living this way. Until ... they get a little help.

The water crisis is solvable. There are solutions. Some are brand-new and innovative, like water filtration systems. Some are age-old, like drilled or hand-dug wells. These solutions bring clean water much closer to the people who need it. A safe water project near a village restores hours each day to a person's life. This time, it's opportunity. It's freedom to go to school and get an education, to work or start a business, to raise a family. Africa alone could save 40 billion hours each year – that's the entire annual workforce of France. Clean water means less disease. That's less money spent on medicine, which means more money for books and school uniforms. And if the water project is built near a school, it can increase attendance, especially among young girls.

The water crisis is vast, but we can solve it. Just 20 dollars can provide one person with access to a clean water project in their village. And this will mean more than clean water ... because water changes everything.

Join us.

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After you watch

Inform a friend and discuss what more you could do to help solve the water crisis? Try to include three new words that you have learned from the video. Also, remember you can read the transcript at any time.

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