



**WATER, SANITATION
AND HYGIENE**



In 2020, around 1 in 4 people lacked drinking water in their homes. That's 2 billion people.



In Sub-Saharan Africa, only 54% of people have access to safe drinking water



2.3 billion people lack basic hand-washing services



In 2020, nearly half the world's population lacked good sanitation



Every day, 1,000 children die from diarrhoea, dysentery, and cholera caused by dirty water and unhygienic living conditions.



WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

You can live for three to five days without water. But if you don't drink after that, your organs begin to shut down and you can die.

If you have water, but it's dirty, you'll get ill. The water will make you sick and you'll get diarrhoea. And then it doesn't matter if you eat healthy food, you're losing it all and are then faced with the risk of life-threatening hunger.

When that happens, it doesn't matter how much water you drink, you're at risk of dying of thirst because your body needs to get rid of all the infected water and you dehydrate rapidly.

So, before anything else, every human needs to have a safe and reliable source of water. Forget housing, medicine, schools, work... Without water, none of that matters.

But water is becoming more and more scarce.

And if you have to travel a long way to get it, that can be a problem too. In some parts of the world, people walk up to seven hours a day to collect and lug water back to their homes. Mostly, this falls to women and girls.

If they're lucky, they'll have a pack animal to help. But more often than not, they won't and

they have to carry the jerrycans filled with water themselves. In the heat. On unmade roads. Maybe through a warzone, or past landmines. Forced to walk for miles, they run the risk of robbery or even violence.

We're not talking about a small problem for a few people. Two billion humans lack clean, safe water today. One in 20 children under five who die, die for want of a tap.

And while mothers walk and fetch and carry, they are not growing or harvesting food. This worsens the hunger problem. If you're walking, you're not producing food. If you're not producing food, you're probably going hungry.

While humans need water, so do crops and livestock. Around 70 per cent of the water we use is for irrigation. So, again, if there's no nearby water, you'll struggle to grow food. And if there's no water for your livestock, they are unlikely to survive. With no crops or livestock, you and your family will likely face life-threatening hunger.

What's more, without water, you can't keep clean which means diseases can easily spread. And if you go to the toilet and can't wash your hands, you become a potentially fatal health hazard.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

Waterborne diseases add to the hunger and malnutrition problem people are already facing.

Every day, 1,000 children die from diarrhoea, dysentery, and cholera caused by dirty water and unhygienic living conditions.

When adults are sick, they can't work. And if they are in a rural area relying on their own land or in an urban area doing daily labour, they can't produce food or earn money. Living on the edge means a few days of not working can put you in danger of life-threatening hunger.

When children are sick, they can't go to school. Without an education they risk being condemned to a life of poverty which, in turn, means less food, more hunger, poor health for them and, eventually, for their children too.

And so the cycle of poverty and life-threatening hunger continues all because of a lack of clean water.

A lack of water can also create conflict with communities fighting over dwindling supplies. War and insecurity make it more difficult for farmers to get to their fields and for food to reach markets.

Climate change, causing more and longer droughts and famines as well as floods, is also a factor. Flooding destroys and contaminates water sources. Drought destroys crops and kills livestock.

Everyone suffers when they cannot get clean and plentiful water. More than 800,000 people in some of the poorest countries in the world die as a result of inadequate water, sanitation, and hygiene each year.

We can't fight life-threatening hunger and malnutrition without tackling the waterborne diseases that contribute to it. That's why we bring safe water, sanitation, and hygiene services (known as WASH) to communities in need all over the world.

In fact, we provide WASH assistance to nearly seven million people every year.

We build and repair water points, toilets and latrines. We distribute water purification tablets and install water filters. We improve irrigation systems in rural communities. And in homes and schools, we teach people about the importance of good hygiene.

By employing sophisticated geophysics, we are also able to locate water resources and tap aquifers. We protect natural springs and pipe water into villages and health centres. And we repair damaged infrastructure to ensure access to adequate sources of clean water.

Our ability to deliver clean water is central to our comprehensive solutions to hunger and malnutrition.

Here are some examples of the work we do across the world.

In Nepal we're helping women and their babies, providing items such as water purification tablets, kettles, water containers, solar water disinfection kits, baby cups, toddler mats, cloth nappies and baby-friendly jars. These all help to create a healthy, clean and safe home.

We are working with people in the Central African Republic to improve their health centres. Installing water filters and hand washing devices in hospitals and fixing and building water and waste treatment facilities. Healthcare workers are also trained in hospital hygiene and cleaning protocols and supplied with buckets, mops, gloves and bleach.

In Chad and Kenya we're installing solar-powered water pumps and irrigation systems. In Chad, this is boosting farmers' productivity by reducing the time they need to spend watering crops from six to two hours. And in Kenya, solar panel water pumps are cutting water collection times from four hours to 15 minutes. This means farmers can focus on other ways of making money and feeding their families.

In many of the countries in which we work, we set up cooperatives where people can come together, work through problems and create their own solutions.

We also provide training on how to run these cooperatives efficiently and effectively. This can be particularly powerful in situations where gender inequality is an issue.

For example, in Afghanistan, women in rural communities often have limited access to sanitary pads so we use the cooperative system to show people how to make reusable pads for menstruation. This not only improves the health and wellbeing of girls and women, but also provides a source of income and independence.

We also work in schools. In Liberia we are building water points in schools and training the students on how to maintain them as well as teaching them about good hygiene. In this way they become ambassadors of good hygiene practices at home, as well as being able to maintain waterpoints in their neighbourhoods.

In Jordan's hot and arid climate, it's vital to make every drop of water count. That's why we are training farmers on water management techniques, including drip irrigation and rainwater harvesting. Where water systems exist, we provide training and equipment to detect leaks in pipes and the skills to repair them. In Iraq, in one six-month period we found and repaired nearly 60 leaks, ensuring people had a good, safe and plentiful water supply.

And we're always innovating, looking for data and evidence on which to build even better policies and programmes. In Madagascar, the HydroNut research project is investigating the relationship between hydro-climatic data and the nutritional and health status of people in the local area. By doing this, we will be better able to predict and prevent nutrition crises.

Maintaining water supplies in the long-run

Developing and extending water and sanitation services involves much more than quick fixes. To sustain water and sanitation improvements, a community-centred approach is central to building local capacity and encouraging a sense of ownership.

By organising and training community-based "Water Committees", we ensure local commitment to managing and maintaining the systems we repair and install. These Water Committees are made up of elected community members who manage water sources and sanitation infrastructure. We also organise local health workers and volunteers to pass on good sanitation and hygiene practices to their neighbours.

In our campaign to eliminate hunger, clean water is as essential as food, but only the cultivation of local know-how can ensure its sustainability.

Providing water in a crisis

While we focus on providing long-term access to safe water and good hygiene practices, we also know that disasters can have an impact on water supplies. So in a crisis, we truck water into communities, repair water sources and install storage tanks and reservoirs. We drill new wells and fix and decontaminate unsafe ones. Install hand-pumps and protect natural springs. And pipe water into hard-to-reach villages and health centres.

We're also experts in coordinating activity. In a disaster, chaos can ensue. Our specialists are trained to help different agencies and local authorities work together to get water and sanitation facilities up and running quickly.

In so doing, we buy what we can from the local community to help strengthen the economy. This puts money and power in the hands of those communities we seek to help. And means that we can bring life-saving water to communities at risk.





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NYANUT'S STORY

Nyanut used to leave home with her donkeys at 6am every day to fetch water. "I went every day and I travelled for over seven hours on foot and my donkeys carried the water on our way back. You would go thirsty and your children would feel sick if you didn't travel to the borehole every day. It was a very hard life."

We drilled the first-ever borehole in her village in South Sudan. Within a few months, the village and the lives of people within it had been transformed. Now Nyanut and her friends, family and neighbours have clean drinking water – on tap - without having to walk for seven-hours to get it. They have latrines too so they no longer defecate in a bush, which is not only unsanitary but also extremely dangerous due to the presence of wild animals.

We set up a Water Committee in the community, made up of five men and five women who are responsible for ensuring that the borehole is maintained. Nyanut was elected as committee chair, managing the finances of the borehole as well as teaching people to build latrines, look after the borehole and maintain safe hygiene at home.

But Nyanut is not just making sure that the community has safe water, she is also changing attitudes in the community. It is usually men who are given positions of responsibility in the community, so Nyanut challenged convention by standing as the Water Committee Chair and being elected into the role. She's changing the face of the community: many girls in the village say they want to follow in Nyanut's footsteps.

Contact us for more information, we would love to hear from you.

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Together, let's take action against hunger.

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