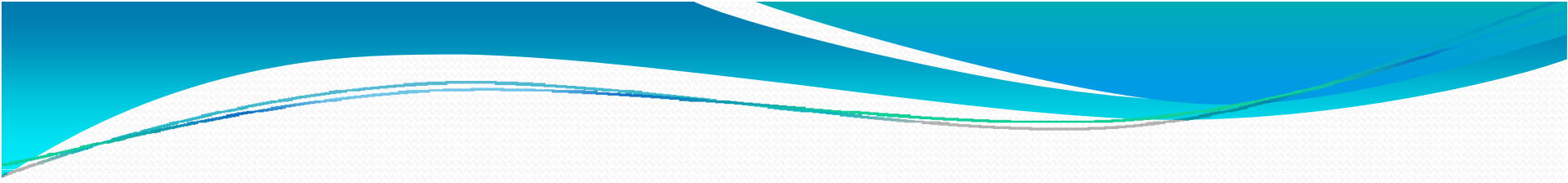


Beyond scarcity: Power, poverty and the global water crisis

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“In this new century, water, its sanitation, and its equitable distribution pose great social challenges for our world. We need to safeguard the global supply of healthy water and to ensure that everyone has access to it.”

Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, 2001

Inequitable Distribution of Water

1.1 billion people lack access to safe, clean water.

That's one in six of us.




The underlying cause of water scarcity is not absolute scarcity; water scarcity is manufactured by institutional and political practices that disadvantage the poor.

average water use.

AVERAGE AMERICAN: 150G/DAY

AVERAGE PERSON IN
A DEVELOPING NATION: 5G/DAY



 = 5g

An average person in America uses about 150 gallons of water daily to cook, clean and drink. An average person in a developing nation struggles to find 5.



Equity & Water

- In many poor countries only 25 percent have access to piped water in their homes, compared with 85 percent of the wealthiest.
- Poor people living in the slums of Manila, the Philippines, Jakarta, Indonesia, and Nairobi, Kenya, pay 5-10 times more for water per unit than wealthy people in the same city—**and more than residents of London or New York.**



Equity & Water

- The poor are often not connected to the utility so they purchase their water in bulk—they pay 10 times more for water than residents (connected to the utility) in high-income areas.
- The poorest households of El Salvador, Jamaica, and Nicaragua spend more than 10 percent of their income on water whereas, in the United Kingdom, they have set a three percent threshold as an indicator of hardship.

Women & Girls

Disproportionately Burdened

- Women spend on average 15-17 hours each week collecting water.
- And, it is not unusual for women to walk in excess of 10 kilometers per day during the dry season.



Women & Girls

Disproportionately Burdened

- An estimated 40 billion hours each year are spent collecting water in Sub-Saharan Africa alone—the equivalent of a year's worth of labor for the entire workforce of France.
- The time lost collecting water reduces income, reinforces poverty, and disempowers women.





“Of course I wish I were in school. I want to learn to read and write...But how can I? My mother needs me to get water.”

Yeni Bazan, age 10, El Alto, Bolivia

Educational Impact

- In Tanzania, school attendance is 12 percent higher for girls who live 15 minutes or less from a water source compared to those that live an hour or more away.
- Also, the absence of sanitation facilities and water in schools is a significant factor to girls dropping out of school.





Solutions

- Sanitation facilities and water should be provided in schools, with separate facilities for girls.
- Legislation should ensure women have equal rights by reforming property laws and irrigation rules.
- Require female representation on water committees.



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