

What's the world's most wished-for present?

The need

Water

Clean water is essential for life, but one in eight of the world's population does not have access to it. This, and lack of safe sanitation, result in over two million people dying from water-related diseases every year.

The lack of clean water close to people's homes also affects people's time, livelihoods and quality of life.

Many women and children in developing countries spend hours each day walking miles to collect water. This water is usually dirty and unsafe but they have no alternative.

Carrying heavy water containers is an exhausting task, which takes up valuable time and energy. It prevents women from doing vital domestic or income generating work and stops children from going to school.

Mangalita Siamajele, returns from the hole where she collects water when the river bed is dry, carrying a metal bucket filled with water on her head.

She struggles to walk as she has a bad hip. "I am so tired," she says. "Where I have come from is very far, walking with 20 litres on my head. I am old, I have a bad hip and am always tired, carrying this bucket twice a day, I need to get home, I need to rest."



Credit: WaterAid / Jim Holmes

WaterAid helps people like Mangalita to build safe water supplies. Clean water means improved health, more time and a better quality of life.

Sanitation

Diarrhoea claims the lives of 5000 children a day. These children are dying because they do not have access to adequate sanitation or safe water. Their deaths, from common diseases, are preventable.

Where there is nowhere safe and clean to go to the toilet, people are exposed to disease, lack of privacy, and indignity.

Bad health caused by poor sanitation has a knock-on effect on the family economy and nutrition.

In many cultures women who have no access to a latrine must wait until it is dark to go to the toilet or have to walk long distances to find an isolated spot. Where there are no toilets girls are prevented from going to school.

WaterAid helps communities to build somewhere safe and clean to go to the toilet. Improving sanitation not only improves health, but also people's dignity and livelihoods.

Hygiene education

To gain the full benefits of safe water and sanitation communities also need to know about the links between diseases and unsafe hygiene practices.

Hygiene education focuses on issues such as personal hygiene - the simple act of washing hands with soap and water can reduce diarrhoeal diseases by a third.

Common diseases related to poor water, sanitation and unsafe hygiene practices are:

Cholera, hepatitis A, dysentery, giardiasis, polio, e-coli, diarrhoea, typhoid, salmonella food poisoning, bilharzia, guinea

worm, intestinal parasites like hookworm and tapeworm, and trachoma.

Zeytu, from Hora Boka, Ethiopia explains the differences that hygiene education has brought to her community.

"We thought it was evil spirits that made our babies sick. But now we have been taught it is not that which makes our children ill, it is the lack of clean water and the absence of cleanliness - now we know why our children have problems."

"The biggest problems are internal parasites, diarrhoea and scabies. We are taught how to care for our children, about the latrine and hygiene education."



Credit: WaterAid / Jenny Matthews

WaterAid helps teach communities about safe hygiene practices and the links between water and sanitation and diseases.

This enables people to become healthier and live in a cleaner environment.

Help fulfil their hopes and wishes this Christmas

Your special Christmas gift will make a lasting difference to people in Africa, Asia and the Pacific region. With clean water and access to sanitation people can start to build on their dreams and improve their future.

About us

WaterAid is an international charity. Our mission is to overcome poverty by enabling the world's poorest people to gain access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene education.

Vision

WaterAid Australia's vision is of a world where everyone has access to safe water and sanitation.

Mission

WaterAid's mission is to overcome poverty by enabling the world's poorest people to gain access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene education.

WaterAid enables the world's poorest people to gain access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene education. These basic human rights underpin health, education and livelihoods and form the first, essential step in overcoming poverty.

We work with local partners, who understand local issues, and provide them with the skills and support to help communities set up and manage practical and sustainable projects that meet their real needs.

We also campaign locally and internationally to change policy and practice and ensure water and sanitation's vital role in reducing poverty is recognised.

What we do

WaterAid and its partners use practical solutions to provide safe water, effective sanitation and hygiene education to the world's poorest people.

We also seek to influence policy at national and international levels.

How we work

WaterAid and its partners work with individuals and families in their communities and use a mixture of low-cost technologies to deliver lasting water, sanitation and hygiene solutions.

Where we work

WaterAid works with people in **17 countries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific region** to improve their quality of life through lasting improvements to water, sanitation and hygiene education using local skills and practical, sustainable technologies.