

The Global Water Crisis



Drinking water

Each year more than five million people die from water-related disease.

For the first time, the number of people without improved drinking water has dropped below one billion.

90 percent of all deaths caused by diarrheal diseases are children under 5 years of age, mostly in developing countries.

Sustainable management of water resources and sanitation provides great benefits to a society and the economy as a whole...access to safe drinking water is essential for achieving gender equality, sustainable development and poverty alleviation.



Sanitation

“Lack of safe sanitation is the world’s biggest cause of infection. It is the number one enemy of world health. And it deprives hundreds of millions of people not only of health but of energy, time, dignity, and quality of life.”

- Gourisankar Ghosh, Executive Director of the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC)

2.5 billion people still lack access to improved sanitation, including 1.2 billion people who still have no facilities at all.

The majority of the illness in the world is caused by fecal matter.

At any one time, more than half the poor of the developing world are ill from causes related to hygiene, sanitation and water supply.

Eighty-eight percent of cases of diarrhea worldwide are attributable to unsafe water, inadequate sanitation or insufficient hygiene.



Impacts of the global water crisis



Kids

Every 15 seconds, a child dies from a water-related disease.

Children in poor environments often carry 1,000 parasitic worms in their bodies at any given time.

For children under age five, water-related diseases are the leading cause of death.

1.8 million children die each year from diarrhea - 4,900 deaths each day.



Women

Millions of women and children spend several hours a day collecting water from distant, often polluted sources.

Lack of toilets makes women and girls vulnerable to violence if they are forced to defecate only after nightfall and in secluded areas. Sanitation enhances dignity, privacy and safety, especially for women and girls. Schools with decent toilet facilities enable children, especially girls reaching puberty, to remain in the educational system.

A study by the International Water and Sanitation Centre (IRC) of community water and sanitation projects in 88 communities found that projects designed and run with the full participation of women are more sustainable and effective than those that do not. This supports an earlier World Bank study that found that women's participation was strongly associated with water and sanitation project effectiveness.



Health

At any given time, half of the world's hospital beds are occupied by patients suffering from a water-related disease.

It is estimated that improved sanitation facilities could reduce diarrhea-related deaths in young children by more than one-third. If hygiene promotion is added, such as teaching proper hand washing, deaths could be reduced by two thirds. It would also help accelerate economic and social development in countries where sanitation is a major cause of lost work and school days because of illness.

Productivity

The estimated economic benefits of investing in drinking water and sanitation:

Every US dollar invested in sanitation provides an economic return of eight US dollars.

An extra 272 million school attendance days a year, an added 1.5 billion healthy days for children under five years of age, together representing productivity gains of US \$9.9 billion a year.

Values of deaths averted, based on discounted future earnings, amounting to US \$3.6 billion a year.

