

The Water Scarcity Problem That's Destroying Countries

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Clean water. It's something almost all of us take for granted. We turn on the tap, fill our cup, let some spill over, and then guzzle it down. It's a privilege we fail to recognize.

There is a colossal water scarcity problem in the world. Millions of people struggle to find enough clean water to survive.

In order to move toward a solution, we need to first understand the problem. In this post, we're going to help you understand the how, what, and why of the water scarcity problem.

The Staggering Lack Of Clean Water In The World



[Over 884 million people](#) worldwide live without clean water.

In order to better comprehend that staggering number, that's the equivalent of:

- 1 in every 10 people on the planet's surface.
- Twice the population of the United States.
- The whole of Europe.

And as the years fly by and overpopulation becomes an increasingly difficult problem to solve, that number continues trending upward, inflating and growing, but never going down.

Water scarcity is a harsh reality.

[By the year 2018](#), some 1.1 billion people worldwide will lack access to any sort of water, and a total of 2.7 billion will find water scarce for at least one month of the year.

Out of those figures, 2.4 billion will have inadequate water sources and have to deal with a series of life threatening diseases. A vast majority of the world population will regularly experience outbreaks of typhoid, cholera, malaria, zika, and dozens of other water borne illnesses and parasites.

In the year 2014, two million people died from diarrheal viruses and the ensuing complications. Out of those numbers, [43 percent](#) were pre-adolescent children, most under the age of five.

Access to basic sanitation and clean affordable water, can save over [17 thousands folks a week](#).

The majority of people afflicted by this problem live in desolate, isolated, poor regions. These are often rural places that in often find themselves embroiled in some sort of political challenges.

In many cases, water, not oil, is the most precious commodity for these disenfranchised citizens, with warlords and local mafias using the resource as a means of power and political pressure.

Access to clean water is of paramount importance for those without it. There are millions of people risking their lives and spending hours just for a clean gallon of water. Children go without any education, their sole responsibility trodding dozens of miles a day and fetching water.

In essence, a community without a viable source of clean water is destined for extinction. Clean water means economic growth, education, better income and healthy neighborhoods.

And the outlook isn't any better:

By 2025, two-thirds of the world's population may face water shortages. Although the surface of our planet is covered mainly by water, over 73 percent to be exact, only 3 percent of it is considered drinkable. And, to complicate matters, only $\frac{1}{3}$ of that scant

number is accessible to humans (the rest is tucked away in glaciers, and remote regions). Finding fresh water sources is an incredibly rare thing.

Overpopulation and consumption has put a strain on an already depleted ecosystem. Many water systems, like lakes, rivers and aquifers are drying up an alarming rate or, due to our meddling, becoming far too polluted to use.

Agriculture, above all other practices, consumes enormous amounts of water, more than any other industry. These precious resources are consumed in an ineffective manner.

Additionally, in impoverished regions, such as Africa (where thousands die from a result of having zero access to clean water) or in Pakistan (where the shortage has claimed $\frac{1}{3}$ of its population), a different set of problems assaults the region: economic water scarcity.

In most of these districts, water treatment plants and “soluble” wells and aquifers are nothing more than open holes in dry river beds. [In Tanzania](#), this last practice led to devastating epidemic that slashed their population by 75% in the late 2013.

What Is Economic Water Scarcity?



In order to understand the water crisis, we need to understand the concept of economic water scarcity.

Economic water scarcity is a term that began having a wide range appeal in mid-2007. It was defined, after a rather long and investigative essay, as a condition caused by the lack of investment in water infrastructure.

The *concept* first came into play after researchers and policymakers, overseen by the International Water Management Institute in Sri Lanka, conducted a 50 year study to determine the viability of sustaining life on Earth with the growing population problem. Their findings were less than hopeful.

One of the prime symptoms of economic water scarcity is a region's capacity, both technological as well as human, to satisfy the area's demand for drinkable water. It is a critical and typical manifestation of underdeveloped countries.

The main aspects of economic water scarcity are:

- A lack of infrastructure with poor sanitation policies. The population has no other choice but to rely on rivers and lakes for their hydration.
- Much of the water is used for agriculture and domestic chores. [Evidence](#) suggests that in many cases the water is "recycled" for different uses. Bathing, laundry, livestock, cleaning and cooking water not only comes from the same source but is oftentimes reused from one chore to another.
- Large parts of the world, particularly in Africa, suffer from economic water scarcity. Developing the right infrastructure would lower the poverty line.
- Terrorist groups and local warlords use their own wealth and resources to create the needed infrastructure, the major caveat being that they control the pipeline and in turn use it for their own goals – mainly recruitment.
- Developing infrastructure in these areas not only requires funding but a complete overhaul of socio-political doctrines.

Consequences of water scarcity:

- Using unclean water, in many areas, leads to an upswell of different disease, some of which are fatal.
- In Africa, women spend half of their day walking and hauling up water from a clear source. The same goes for sections of India and Latin America. It is estimated that in the remotest parts of Africa, the female population spends a combined total of 40 billion hours a year walking to and from a well.

- Communities don't have the time to grow. Most families waste a great deal of their productive hours dealing with the problems that arise from water scarcity. Access to clean water gives families time to go to school and earn an adequate income, helping them fight off poverty.
- Women are mainly responsible for water collection in these areas. In [Sub Saharan Africa, 72% of the water collected is done by women.](#)
- It takes an enormous amount of water to grow crops, maintain livestock and ultimately feed a nation. Less water means a rise in endemic and localized famine.
- Less water means less sewage flow and more stagnant water. These pools, particularly in tropical and subtropical environments, often become fast breeding ground for insects and parasites. One of the most far reaching and prevalent insects is the mosquito, a known carrier of West Nile Virus, malaria, zika and other infections.
- Economies that, due to their natural landscapes could easily increase their gross income and national wealth through a busy tourist trade, have had no other choice but to closethis venue of revenue. Hotels, restaurants, shopping stores and other attractions no longer are able to maintain an adequate level of sanitation for visitors.

Countries with a high degree of water scarcity:



All countries suffer from water scarcity in one way or another.

For [example, the United States](#), a nation that takes for granted the gift that is drinkable tap water, is in the midst of a major water crisis. The Western States, among them California, are having to cut back on water delivery to certain areas. The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, the region's water supplier, will deliver 15% less water to cities in the greater Los Angeles area starting in July 2018.

Nonetheless, the US and other first world nations have the advantage of a growing and confident economy, one that can acclimate itself to any sort of natural woe by investing heavily in infrastructure.

Others are not so lucky. 3 countries standing on the brink of complete water related collapse are:

- **Yemen:** According to UPI, Yemen's capital, Sanaa, is expected to be the first major city in the world to experience full water scarcity, a direct result of the many turmoils and local military brews of the area.
- **Libya:** Another war torn country that's facing a full sanitary cataclysm, the constant regime changes and wild political upheavals are taxing the nation's capacity to create a viable water policy.
- **Jordan:** The country of Jordan finds itself in one of the driest geographical latitudes in the planet. Its only source of water is the Dead Sea and the Jordan River. Transforming saltwater to fresh is a financial hurdle that's hurting their weak economy.

Conclusion



The United Nations considers water scarcity to be one of the most detrimental and crippling crisis attacking struggling economies and communities.

The [Millennium Development](#) Goals (8 fundamental objectives established by a committee of different nations within the United Nation) established the necessity of making water scarcity a key problem to eradicate. The United Nations Millennium Declaration, following the Millennium Summit, aimed by 2015 to “halve the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water.”

While we may not have solved the problem of water scarcity, we’re certainly making an effort to minimize the problem in as many ways as possible.

Audrey Hepburn said, “Water is life, and clean water means health.”

She knew what she was talking about.