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Ethiopia, Water Scarcity

Ethiopia: Water Security

I was born in a rural town of Ethiopia called Elaa. I grew up on our farm with my siblings of two brothers, as well as two sisters. I started working on our farm when I was 7 years old. It was a pretty tough life before coming to America. When my father died and my mother became ill, it was a turning point in my life. At the age of 7, I became responsible for my whole family. Not only did I have to get water, but I also had to manage our farm and feed our family. My father had been a leader in our village. Everyone

looked to him for advice and how to solve all their problems. Now they turned to me. It was overwhelming but my father had taught me well. I was able to help my village in addition to my family. However, ours was a day to day existence. We could only worry about our daily needs. We never thought about a solution to our water problems. Just surviving was the main thing.

We were lacking in water, in quality as well as quantity. My responsibilities included planting crops and using ox to dig the ground. I also had to look out for our crops to make sure they were safe during the growing process. We did not have many resources outside of our farm. It was hard to maintain the farm without proper water. That also influenced our ability to have consistent food. Being one of the oldest siblings, I was responsible for obtaining water for our farm. Some days I was successful after walking miles to the nearest well. Most of the time, I was not. This complicated our consistency as well. During the times I was not taking care of the farm, I would attend a local school. I was too young for the education to have any benefits for me. I had to leave school at a certain point because my mother had fallen ill. Last year one of my teachers asked me if I would be interested in writing a paper for the World Food Prize because I already had experience with food insecurity in Ethiopia, I jumped at the chance. I wrote the paper.

Little did I know how much this would impact my life as I was writing paper. I became more involved with the problem of food security. I realize I would change this problem that my people are facing. In searching for solutions, I started thinking about the heads of my people back to Ethiopia. What would make their life better? The answer was easy-- water.

We don't all face the same challenges. Countries in the West have a completely different perception of struggles with survival as opposed to those located in the Middle East and the surrounding areas. For example, many countries in Africa are worried about the essentials such as water, food, shelter, and clothing. The West doesn't usually have to worry about those basic necessities at large. They're fortunate when it comes to that.

Ethiopia's challenges include famine, lack of water, poor economic advancements (although, currently one of the fastest growing economy in the world). Ethiopia has had these issues for years because the people depend heavily on the land.



Because of its location, Ethiopia has many different resources and features. Not only is the weather usually beautiful in the summer but the temperature is consistent year-round with an average of 75 °F. As we are close to the equator the winter weather is not brutal averaging 50 °F. Ethiopia is located at the horn of Africa. The location affords the country many resources and different features. The weather is usually beautiful. The temperatures are usually consistent at a year-round average of 75 °F. The winter weather is not brutal as we are close to the equator, but the average is usually around 50 °F. The summer season is the most desirable. The land features are some of the most exotic. The Great Rift Valley runs through the country. The Nile River (the only river to flow north), also flows through Ethiopia, toward Egypt. Ethiopia is one of the most historical places in the world dating back to early human civilization. Ethiopia is divided into regions with Oromia being the biggest.

Unfortunately, Ethiopia is one of those countries that still struggles with the basic necessities. Although they may have plenty of natural resources, they're not distributed equally. Those natural resources are barely available to the majority of the public. Those natural resources include, water, food, shelter, and anything else that grows from the land or is harnessed from the animals. According to Washingtonpost.com, Ethiopia is currently facing a killer drought and it's going unnoticed. There are 7.7 million people facing famine.

Ethiopia's rural population sits roughly around 80%, leaving 20% as the urban population. The country's population is 107 million as of 2018. That's a lot of people living in rural areas. This means that many people farm as their means of survival. The farm of a single household, on an average, is 2.2 acres (according to www.fao.org). That's comparable to two football fields. That's what they have the whole year, and anything the weather permits them to grow. Most of the time, there is drought. Lack of water accessibility causes the farmers to lose their ability to create reliability with regard to food production. The little food or water they may have is consumed by the average household of 6-8.

Typical family

The typical family diet consists of Injera, made out of barley, with sides and soups made out of beef, lentils, and similar crops that are grown at the farm. The Injera is prepared over an open fire on a ceramic plate. Injera is barley liquefied into batter, then cooked on the ceramic plate, exactly as you would do with a pancake.

The wages earned by families living in the rural part of Ethiopia are heavily dependent on the time of year and weather. If all things go as planned, rainfall will allow farmers to gain profit from selling the crops they were able to grow, or sell livestock such as sheep, cows, ox, goats, and similar animals. Imagine the struggle when there is no water and the average rainfall is about 51 cm. You can't feed the livestock, you can't grow any crops, and you most certainly won't be able to survive very long without water. It's an essential part of who we are as organisms.

It would be easy for the average Ethiopian if the economy was shaped like the western world, but helpful tools such as education are not readily available. People can't just get up and go to school. It's either very expensive or just physically out of reach. On top of that, staying on the farm to care for it is priority. What makes matters worse is that healthcare is also out of reach for the majority. Hospitals are Not around every corner, as you would see in the Western world, such as the United States. If someone was ill, finding transportation is not convenient. You can't call Uber. You would most likely have to carry the ill on some sort of home-made stretcher. Majority of roads are still dirt. There have been improvements within the last decade; however, the rural part of Ethiopia is dirt roads covered in rocks. If you were lucky enough to make it to the hospital, you would quickly become depressed by the corpse you had been carrying.

The most common diseases linked to food insecurity are malaria, Rotaviral Diarrhea, Hepatitis. These mainly occur because of the contaminated drinking water. It reminded me of all the trips I made to obtain water for my family. We drank dirty water. It wasn't good, but the water was needed to survive. People get sick drinking dirty water, but they have no choice. They don't even think about the fact that the water is making them sick.

These issues are all a chain reaction to lack of water in good quantity and quality. People don't even have toilets. As an American citizen, using the restroom is simple. One would walk into the restroom, most likely with a door, sit or stand and finish your business, flush, then wash your hand and walk out. That's it! In Ethiopia, however, it's a little different. The "restroom" is actually a 30 ft. hole in the ground. The top of the hole is covered by wood boards being laid in layers on top of it. At the center is another hole for you to squat on. That's how you relieve stress. One would squat on top of a 30 ft. hole. You can definitely forget about toilet paper. Hopefully, you'd have leaves around. There is no sink. This makes it very easy to spread disease.

When I had to get water for drinking, I was to walk mile after mile that seemed to last forever, at the least three hours. Once I got to my destination, tired and dehydrated, there would be crowds waiting to get a little drop. The worst thing was coming back to the farm without any water. Without water, you cannot do anything.

Lack of quality water is a problem that we must eliminate in today's world, especially, with so much advancement in technology. There are steps that we can take to ensure the Ethiopian rural residents have the same equal accessibility to water as the rest of the world. This is my proposal!

Solutions

1. Dig well
2. water tower
3. NGO a nonprofit organization
4. Drip irrigation

First and foremost, we will need the help of the Ethiopian government. There has to be genuine care for the citizens across the nation. The government will have to create an organization that is non-profit. This group will consist of hand selected humanitarians known for this type of work as it will ensure quality control of the organization. The Non-profit organization will, in turn, create paths to water accessibility, whether that means by creating wells or water towers. Water towers are preferred to be on each farm, and wells can be located at a fairly decent distance from the farms. With proper tools such as drills used in the Western world, digging a well would be effortless. Currently, the majority of the people in Ethiopia do not have a water collection system that is widely manufactured. Most people create their own tools, whether it's simply having big tubs outside or just letting the water fall on the land. Having a water tower would allow the government to calculate usage for payments and taxes. The farmers would have water all year. They would be able to grow crops, feed livestock, and take care of their families. The farmers would also grow crops to sell, if they desired. As they made profit, preferably after 5 years, they would start to pay taxes for the water. That would allow local citizens to have at least the bare minimum to survive. The farms could also now employ local citizens to work on the farm for a decent wage. Of course, that is after they have had 5 years to profit. Until then, the average family size of 6-8 would show a benefit with regard to production on the farms. If farmers did not want to partake of any business with the government,

they would be allowed to use the well created by the non-profit. However, the wells would be open to the public. That would create inconsistencies in the availability of public water. The wells would most likely be used by smaller households. one of the problems is that. There has been a struggle with power between the majority and minority in government which complicates the productivity of the economy. The country, however, currently has the fastest growing economy in the world. This is the perfect time to make changes that would allow citizens to provide for their families.

An intense underground system would be required in order to disperse water throughout farms using water towers. This would have to be negotiated directly with the farmers and their preference.

The purpose of this proposal is to simply create ways to make water available to all those that walk on this Earth. It's not logical that people have to pay for water as everyone is entitled to the resources nature provides us; especially if our lives are dependent on those resources. Right now, if they're not fortunate enough to have the currency to make that purchase, their lives are on the line. Their family tree becomes dehydrated. We can easily provide water to everyone; it's just a matter of finding a way without using the true capitalistic system. We must stop putting the value of life in the form of fictitious currency. Life is real, money is not. At the end of the day, regardless of where you come from, you deserve to live. We all have rights to what is provided to us by nature. I think we've put so much faith into money that we've forgotten about the little kids that are dying right now because they don't have water. There are mothers watching their kids cry without the ability to do anything about it. There are fathers who are frustrated just to bring something back to the house. That is no way to live. We are all on this Earth together; we need to make it easy for ourselves. Think to yourself, if there was a person in front of you right at this exact moment, kneeling on the ground, begging for a little bit of water, would you give it? Would you offer the water? I hope the answer for anyone reading this would be "yes". If the answer is "yes", then why not do right by those who co-exist among us? Why not turn the other cheek? We know there are people out there suffering, however we seem to think its fiction because we don't have to deal with it. Put yourself in the shoes of those struggling to live. I am reaching for solution, I started thinking the needs of about my people back Ethiopia. What would make their life better? The answer was easy –water.

Access to a local well would be the best solution to the water problem in the village of Elaa. I plan to solve the problem. I own land in my village. First, I will dig a well on my land to give the people access to clean water. Then I will donate the land to the village. I can do this on my own but with the government involvement it will be much easier. This will assure the villagers clean water for their lifetime. In addition to access to the well, the farmers must be educated in using drip irrigation. I knew nothing about drip irrigation until I saw use in American. This method drip irrigation would be easy for Ethiopia farmers to implement. Not only will it conserve water, but it will allow the crop to survive. the cost of the well will be \$15,000 to \$25,000 I have already started fundraising for my project. The most powerful book. I have read is forty chances, finding hope for hunger by Howard Buffet.

In this book he uses the old adage "*give a man fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will eat for a lifetime.*" But Buffet goes on to say "*teach a woman to fish and everyone will eat*" this is how technology can help people. Teaching farmers to use drip irrigation will help life for whole village.

I can make a real difference for vulnerable people facing the Ethiopian water crisis sponsoring a village water project with life water, to bring transformation to a community of people in Ethiopia. Sponsoring a village water project is a great way to change the lives of the people. according to Howard Buffett quote

"If you plan for a year, plant a seed. If for ten years, plant a tree. If for a hundred years, teach the people. When you sow a seed once, you reap a single harvest. When you teach people, you will reap a hundred harvests. "

The action that I will take is to spread awareness. Also, through proper education I hope to go back and make an impact on the community. If I can financially support my proposal after completing college, I will do so. I hope to become part of a global organization that can, not only help my community, but the world at large. We must care for each and every person to ensure that we have the same chance to live our lives. Others throughout the world can read and understand the struggles. Visiting locations that are struggling will be eye opening. That's all you need to make a change, seeing that a change is needed.

I hope this sparks some sort of fire in our hearts to change the way we treat our fellow citizens of the Earth.

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