

A GOOD EDUCATION

...begins with access to safe water and proper sanitation

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Education is critical for breaking the cycle of poverty and yet over half of the world's schools lack access to safe water and sanitation facilities.

Lack of clean water has serious effects on student's academic performance and attendance rates. The lack of safe water can cause even the best students to lose momentum as they deal with stomach pains and diarrhea from disease and hunger.

Students miss class to go fetch water, or to care for sick parents or siblings. In many places HIV/AIDS has already caused a large percentage of children to become orphans, requiring students to drop out and find work to provide food and care for younger siblings. If teachers are sick, classes get cancelled for all students.

Schools cannot run programs if they cannot provide water to students, faculty and their families.

Lack of Water = Lack of Equality

For girls, the situation is especially troublesome. If schools do not have proper toilets, girls drop out once they reach puberty. Further, it is typically the responsibility of the women to fetch water thus limiting their access to both education and business opportunities. Think about it: everyday, women and young girls carry more than 40 pounds of dirty water from sources over 4 miles away from their homes. This leaves little time for education which is critical to changing the long term prospects of developing nations.

With the many additional burdens that a lack of clean water brings, education simply becomes less of a priority. This sets up an unfortunate cycle of poverty and inequality as without a proper education, there is little chance of improving one's situation later in life. The Water Project is working to break this cycle. Sometimes the first public voice the women of a community ever have, comes from an individual woman who is part of a water committee.