

Every **woman** counts. Every **second** counts.

# WATER FOR WOMEN





# INTRODUCTION

Clean water isn't just a matter of life and death. It's not just about thirst, hunger and sanitation.

It's about opportunity.

Without access to clean water, the world's poorest people will stay poor.

More and more communities around the world are forced to survive with limited or no access to clean water, and the burden of collecting water usually falls on the shoulders of women and girls. It's estimated that globally they spend 200 million hours every single day simply collecting water for themselves and their families - time that could be spent in education, working and earning, with their family, or contributing to the community.<sup>1</sup>

This time has been lost; holding women back from having equal opportunities and from reaching their potential. The interlinkages between the development agendas for water availability and gender equality, in particular women's empowerment, must be recognised and we need to work together to enable women to get their time back.

In 2013, the *We Can't Wait* report was issued which looked at sanitation through the eyes of women. The *Water for Women* report now looks at water through the eyes of women and explores the impacts, and potential solutions, that enable women to reclaim their time.

This report explains the connections between lack of access to clean water and other development areas, in particular gender equality. We do this through the voices of women involved in designing and running water programmes, and also those who have been given greater opportunity for earning, education and enjoyment of life, as a direct result of water programmes.

WaterAid will set the context for the report by showing the impact of poor water access on each stage of a woman's life, from birth to old age. Oxfam then presents the connection between water, gender equality and empowerment. Unilever hand dishwashing brand, Sunlight, provides a private sector perspective, highlighting the role of brands in contributing to development issues, and finally NextDrop looks at the opportunity for technology in unlocking women's time. Programmes from WaterAid, Oxfam, Sunlight and NextDrop are set out as examples of different actions that are being taken to improve water access across different environments.

In September 2015, United Nations Member States will agree a new set of Sustainable Development Goals which will set a pathway to eradicating poverty by 2030. This is a unique opportunity to drive progress on gender equality and women's empowerment. A dedicated goal for ambitious increases in access to water and sanitation is essential, and will enable the gender goal to be met as well.

This report explores the roles that water can play in improving women's lives. Let's ensure 2015 is a year for change – when water for women is recognised as central to poverty eradication. Join us to help make the voices of women across the world heard. This is just the start of the conversation.

## #WaterforWomen

Every **woman** counts. Every **second** counts.

Written by women for women:  
Jane, Jenny, Hanneke and Anu

## WORLD WATER ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME, UNESCO



Michela Miletto, WWAP UNESCO coordinator a.i.

Women are the most powerful drivers of change. They are agents of hope and solidarity, are

mothers to humanity, often carry the heaviest burdens, and possess priceless knowledge and experience.

However they are also often the most under-represented people, silenced in society despite their enormous contributions.

Landmark events like World Water Day and World Water Week remind us of the importance of having access to sufficient clean and safe water. It is a human right to have such water. But how many people enjoy this right? How many women and girls lose out on such a "luxury"? The World Water Assessment Programme of UNESCO is committed to empowering

women and fostering gender equality through research into the generation of this essential baseline - water.

Picture a world in which all women are encouraged to share their knowledge and participate in decision-making processes. Where they are released from the burden of water collection and receive salaries equal to men. This vision is attainable and within our reach. This is why a dedicated and ambitious goal on water and sanitation, and the impact this can have on the gender equality goal, is crucial in this year's Sustainable Development Goals.

2015 is a very special year.

Every woman, every second, every drop and every word counts. I'm honoured to add my thoughts to the important work started here by Unilever, Sunlight, WaterAid, Oxfam and NextDrop to bring women's rights, through the impact of water, centre stage in the global debates on sustainable development.



# THE RIPPLE EFFECT

Time lost due to walking and waiting for water is having a ripple effect on women's lives, their communities and whole economies. Surveys from 45 developing countries show that women and children bear the primary responsibility for water collection in 76% of households. This is time NOT spent carrying out income generating activities, caring for family members, attending school or simply looking after women's needs and aspirations.

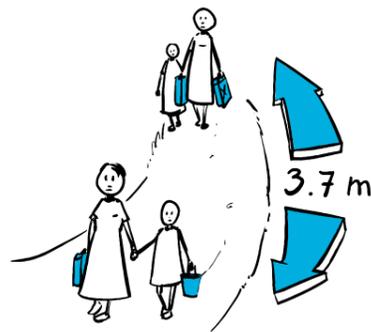
(Oxfam)

THE PROBLEM IS ACCESS TO WATER

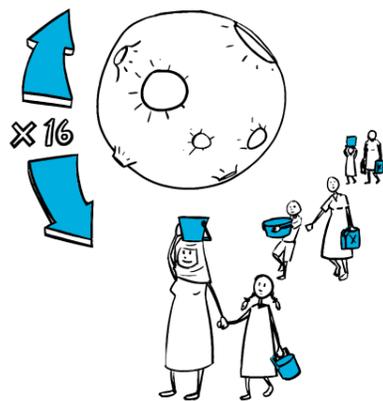
On average, globally, women and children spend 200 million hours every day collecting water. <sup>1</sup>



In Africa and Asia, girls and children walk an average of 3.7 miles a day just to fetch water. <sup>2</sup>



In South Africa alone, women collectively walk the equivalent distance of 16 times to the moon and back every day just to get the water their families need to survive. <sup>3</sup>



WHICH IMPACTS TIME AND THEREFORE THE ECONOMY

For every \$1 USD spent on water and sanitation there is a \$4 USD economic return. <sup>7</sup>



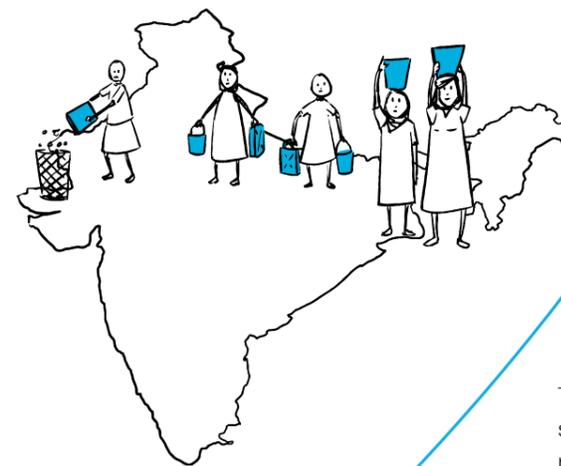
Women represent 40% of the global labour force, yet in Sub-Saharan Africa 40 billion working hours (equivalent to a year's worth of labour by the entire workforce in France) are lost every year to water collection. <sup>4</sup>



In just one of India's cities, Hubli-Dharwad – working, low-income households suffer an estimated city-wide loss of over 10.9 million hours per year. <sup>5</sup>

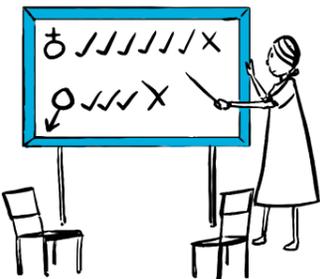


Across India as a whole, it's estimated that women spend 150 million work days every year fetching and carrying, equivalent to a national loss of income of 10 billion rupees – this is \$160 million USD. <sup>6</sup>



OPPORTUNITY IS AFFECTED AS A RESULT

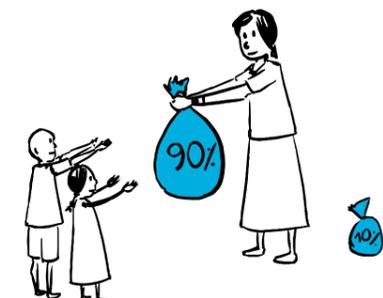
According to UNICEF, one in four girls does not complete primary school compared with one in seven boys. <sup>8</sup> However, school enrolment rates for girls have been shown to improve by over 15% when provided with clean water and a toilet facility, given girls no longer have to walk miles every day to fetch water. <sup>9</sup>



Increasing women's access to clean water can free up to hundreds of hours annually that they can instead devote to more valuable pursuits such as strengthening families and communities, earning a living and leisure. <sup>10</sup>



The impact of women reclaiming time shouldn't be underestimated - women reinvest up to 90% of their income back into their families, improving their family's health and nutrition and ensuring that their children get a good education. <sup>11</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Ref: World Health Organization and UNICEF <sup>2</sup> Ref: (The) Right to Water, Fact Sheet No. 35, United Nations, OHCHR, UN-HABITAT, WHO <sup>3</sup> Ref: A. Roberts, 2008 <http://bit.ly/194ysCr> <sup>4</sup> Ref: World Bank, 2012/UNDP, 2009. <http://bit.ly/1zSc2wW>

Illustrations by Florent Eymerly

<sup>5</sup> Ref: UN: <http://bit.ly/1DWAQET> <sup>6</sup> Ref: UN: <http://bit.ly/1DWAQET> <sup>7</sup> Ref: Business For Social Responsibility: <http://bit.ly/16KNgEw> <sup>8</sup> Ref: UNICEF <sup>9</sup> Ref: UNICEF <sup>10</sup> Ref: UNICEF <sup>11</sup> Ref: UNICEF <http://bit.ly/1o6UA51>

# TIME AFTER TIME

Jane Wilbur, Equity, Inclusion and Rights Advisor, WaterAid

Water is critical at every stage of a woman's life. The relationship between water and women's time runs deep. At every stage in life, the absence of safe water robs women of opportunity and even life itself.

The human right of access to clean water, close to home, can unlock a woman's potential – economically, educationally and socially. Its absence can lock women in a cycle which is repeated from mother to daughter.



**Birth**

Can you imagine preparing to give birth and having to factor in time to get a jerry can of dirty water from a nearby river because the clinic has no safe water supply? One in five newborns die because they were washed in dirty water, in environments with poor sanitation and hygiene. A life needlessly ends before it even begins.



**The early years**

The impact water has on women's time can start as young as five. In many cultures, as soon as they are able to carry the canisters they will spend hours each day fetching water with their mothers. If drinking the dirty water doesn't lay them low, it may make their family members sick and keep girls out of school to help care for them. Time for school and play are lost to chores and illness.



**Adulthood**

The challenges grow as girls move into adolescence. In a school without a water supply or separate, clean, accessible toilets, something as natural as menstruation can cause girls to drop out every month. Some never come back. The situation for disabled students is even worse. So for want of such simple amenities, a young woman might abandon education entirely – and with it the power to control her own future.

With no safe water or sanitation at home, at school, in clinics or workplaces, women can be condemned to a lifelong battle of wasted time and opportunity, of drudgery, disease and indignity, magnified even further as the mind and body ages.



# TIME TO GROW

WaterAid is just one of many organisations collaborating with women around the world to design programmes that meet their specific needs. In the case of 60-year-old Aljira Santos, from Timor-Leste, access to water means she can develop her garden so she can grow more food for her family.

*"We only had a lime tree before. Now the things in the garden have grown since we have got water nearby.*

*My children are happy with me because Mum is growing plants and I can give them some. I produce income to pay for my children to go to school. I take fruit and vegetables to sell at the Liquica market and sometimes people buy it from me while I am on my way to market.*

*Sometimes people say all you do is work in your garden, but I don't care because I love my garden."*



"I used to collect water at 4am so I didn't have to queue. It was so far, I had to walk five kilometres. We had to force ourselves to collect water otherwise we don't have any water."



# TIME FOR HEALTH

With so many still lacking access to a basic need like water, there is an enormous challenge ahead that will require significant investment in the rollout of water and sanitation services.

There is a very important role for the government to provide the context which enables clean water access. The right framework can help facilitate and encourage investment in water, sanitation and hygiene, as well as support research into improving water security and explore new and innovative approaches to sustainable water access.

WaterAid worked on a five year project funded by the UK Department for International Development in partnership with the Government of Bangladesh to bring water and sanitation to millions of poor people in Bangladesh. Bishnopudi, 60, from Sonaram Karbari village in the remote Chittagong Hill Tracts, had her life transformed by the installation of the most basic human services.

*"I've lived here for 37 years. We used to collect water twice a day, carrying two 20 litre pitchers each time. The old water was dirty and even worse in the rainy season. It tasted bad and we got stomach diseases. I was visiting the doctor every two or three months and paying 100TK every time.*

*So when the tubewell was installed we were very happy. Now I don't have to go to the doctor."*

# WATERAID APPROACH

The response to the water crisis is as much political as it is technical or financial.

WaterAid supports communities to call for their rights to safe water, sanitation and hygiene – and to help service providers meet their demands affordably and sustainably.

For example, the Centre of Rural Studies and Development in India selected women to take part in advocacy and human rights training. In partnership, they formed groups in villages to raise awareness about women's issues, and analysed solutions and strategies that could help improve the lives of women and their communities.

Together they ran workshops with the Rural Water Supply Department aimed at making it more responsive to people's rights and needs; indeed, the media was used to pressurise the government to take corrective measures. They also demanded their rights through peaceful rallies and demonstrations.

Consequently, the women now feel more confident to articulate their demands to a variety of stakeholders. The community is starting to accept the women's new leadership roles and the Rural Water Supply Department is more responsive and accountable to the communities. The quality of water services has improved and women spend an average of 20% less time collecting water.

# IN PRACTICE - THE ROLE OF WATER IN ADDRESSING GENDER EQUALITY

Jenny Lamb, Oxfam, Water and Sanitation Engineer

“Every woman counts, every second counts” is a motto I, as a water sanitation engineer, always keep with me when I’m deployed to emergencies across the globe. For many it is a life of walking long distances to collect water, which takes an estimated 26% of women’s time in rural Africa, 40 billion hours in total each year; thus a life of missing school, work and playtime because, in many cultures, bringing water home is one of the main priorities for women and girls. It’s a constant reminder that lifting the burden of collecting water – through successful and sustainable water programmes – relies totally on participation from the community, in particular, women. These discussions inform gender analysis of the community, which helps us understand who represents and makes decisions within/for the community, and the dynamics at the household level. Understanding the day to day routine of women and girls; the public health and protection risks associated with this, helps us understand their enabling environment and aspirations for change, and potential barriers. It is upon these areas we focus on developing relationships with the women and girls to exercise change and to reduce the duty they bear of collecting water, and allow them to embrace other ambitions other than collecting water.

I have seen examples of this across my work. For example in South Sudan, where the women knew they needed to dissuade themselves from taking water from the river by developing more appropriate water points. One afternoon in the shade under a tree, the host and displaced population discussed in detail how it would be managed, which members of the community would be involved in the project, and how this would be decided etc. I have vivid memories of us all digging the water pipework trenches together – and the outburst of laughter and singing when water finally came through.

#### **The critical role of women in successful community driven programmes.**

Women and girls play invaluable roles in designing, implementing and monitoring Oxfam’s water programmes in their communities.

As women and girls are disproportionately affected by issues like water, they often are in the best position to identify solutions and play key roles contributing to the success of water programmes on the ground. Women’s role in being a part of the solutions to development issues, like water, is increasingly being recognised.

Thus, it’s about making **women’s invisibility visible!**



# EMPOWERED TO MAKE A BIG CHANGE

Gomati Dhami of Darchula District, Far Western Region of Nepal gives an account of her story.

*"We established the water users committee and they elected me president.*

*People were elected by consensus - everyone voted.*

*Before we had this system we used to collect water from a pipe at the side of the road. It only used to provide water some of the time. When we couldn't get water from there we had to go further away - to a waterfall - and it isn't always flowing with lots of water. During the dry season it could take us two and a half hours to collect.*

*Because we now have this water system, and all households can get safe water easily, we are able to maintain good hygiene and sanitation, as well as safe drinking water. And the time we took to fetch water before is now spent on producing vegetables. And by growing these vegetables we are healthier and we can earn some money by selling any extra produce to others.*

*There's no question of comparison! Before we had no water so we couldn't produce vegetables like this and I didn't even know how to produce them! Before we would buy or grow, in the rainy season, a green leaf vegetable and maize, but now I grow many different vegetables...radishes, cabbages, cauliflower, chillies. We use the water that has been used for washing and bathing for irrigation.*

*Before this project this water would have been wasted. With the money I get from selling the extra vegetable produce I buy things like wheat, rice, oil and salt. I've only just started this vegetable production but later, if I have more money from selling, I hope to invest it in my children's education."*



# LIVES UNLOCKED – WE WOMEN NO LONGER HAVE TO TAKE THAT LONG WALK FOR WATER!

The lives of Asha Yussuf, Dakana Madey and Abdia Ibrahim from Malagufu, North-East Kenya, were changed for the better when Oxfam installed a new generator and water pump.

They used to walk between six to seven kilometres for water, managing to carry 20 litres on their back at a time. Abdia remembers, *“By two or three in the afternoon, you’d have no water left”*. Asha spoke of how her life now doesn’t *“revolve around getting water”*, and she can *“drink, wash, and cook without a second thought”* while Dakana said that after they were equipped with their water kiosk they *“could start having other priorities...such as education or work. This water system has given us opportunities that we’ve never had before.”*

## A goal worth the participation

Better provision of safe drinking water, sanitation, hygiene services and education help women and girls break out from a life of fetching water and this means more time on their own, setting their own agendas and living their own lives.



# OXFAM APPROACH

In this next section Oxfam looks at how implementation of water access programmes must involve their primary beneficiaries – the women in these communities.

## A common agreement between policy makers and WASH practitioners is the need for good water governance.

However, different interpretations of the term governance and general assumption that ‘good’ governance will lead to ‘good’ outcomes for all, masks a lack of understanding as to how governance works in practice. Practitioners need to go beyond just consulting with women and men on the water committee design, as discussing roles set for women is not enough. One needs to understand more the underlying power and gender dynamics in a community before initiating a change that might lead to a negative outcome in another part of the community structure and norms.

A useful framework for exercising gender equality is one developed by Franks & Cleaver (2007), which presents three key concepts to be understood and unpacked in detail - namely resources, mechanisms and outcomes. Practically, in the concept of, ‘resources’ one needs to articulate which actors need to access water (individuals, groups), the economic, environmental and human labour resources involved, the social structures, the institutions, and systems of rights and entitlements – all with a gender lens. Then ‘mechanisms’ on the other hand include the tariffs and fees, the rules and norms, arrangements for queues etc. Notably a tariff is often not gender neutral as it requires the ability to command cash. ‘Outcomes’ logically refers to the water which is accessed but also refers to other efforts e.g. the impact on livelihood, wellbeing etc. Thus, we need far better awareness of how poor men and women are limited in their

community, for example how does their capacity to act, in order to affect change, compared with those who are richer and more powerful? Are they able to reshape inequitable water governance arrangements, and what is the cost to them (social and material) of doing so?

Achieving gender justice is a priority for Oxfam. It is not only a matter of basic rights but also a key means of addressing poverty. Oxfam puts women’s rights at the heart of all we do, to end violence against women and to strengthen women’s leadership and participation.

Oxfam’s humanitarian programme practitioners ensure a consistent approach to promoting gender equality. A good tool to support them in this is Oxfam’s minimum standards for gender in emergencies<sup>1</sup> which is built on four key areas:

1. Using gender analysis throughout the project cycle to inform planning, programme design and implementation, monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning
2. Ensuring participation, dignity and empowerment
3. Promoting gender equality through internal practices
4. Addressing gender-based violence and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse

Furthermore, Oxfam<sup>2</sup> developed a rapid care analysis tool to assess context-specific patterns of unpaid household work and care of people in both urban and rural contexts. This tool discusses options to redistribute and reduce care responsibilities more equitably through focus group discussion and visual aids. For instance, one discussion can be identifying the diversity of the women and men’s work activities on average per week.

Of course collection of water is a key activity, which supports other tasks at the household – e.g. care and bathing for the elderly and/or the children, to preparing food or watering their crops. In practice this has led to an eye-opening exercise for both women and men of how disproportionate the time devoted to care work at the household is for women. In Oxfam’s Ethiopia programme this open, visual and transparent discussion is igniting action(s) for change – thus building fair equity for women<sup>3</sup>.



<sup>1</sup> <http://www.oxfam.org/en/research/minimum-standards-gender-emergencies> <sup>2</sup> <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/participatory-methodology-rapid-care-analysis-302415>

<sup>3</sup> <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/blog/2015/01/understanding-unpaid-care-work-in-ethiopia-through-first-hand-testimonies>

# “THE WORLD’S MOST PRECIOUS RESOURCE – TIME”

Hanneke Willenborg,  
Vice-President, Sunlight,  
Unilever

From innovation and product development, service delivery, awareness raising, capacity building and understanding the needs of women, the private sector has a great deal to contribute to creating solutions for global challenges.

Easing the burden of women is something that we can strive to do every day at Unilever. As a global fast moving consumer goods company, people use our products to meet their everyday needs. It is our responsibility to have a positive impact on those people and we aim to do this by creating quality products and to have a positive impact on the communities we serve.

By embedding sustainability in the heart of our brands we can make a significant difference: we can achieve sustainable business growth at the same time as improving the lives of the people we serve. When Sunlight was first introduced as a brand in 1883, it was actually created to 'ease the burden on women'. Though more evenly shared nowadays, in many countries the responsibility of household chores still falls to women. Each new Sunlight innovation is designed with one modest but important aim: to make it that much easier to wash the dishes.

As this report outlines, the burden of water collection on women and the time that is taken from a woman's day, every day, to collect water is simply not acceptable. This is time that women should be able to reclaim for education, in work, family or for themselves.

We believe that the private sector can – and should – make a huge contribution to empowering women by helping them reclaim time. In 2013 we identified an opportunity with Oxfam to use our expertise in understanding women's needs to co-develop a programme with this objective. Together we developed a social enterprise that is run by local women for long-term sustainability. The Water Centres provide clean water to peri-urban communities, preventing women from travelling long distances or using dirty water – currently there are two working Water Centres, one in Okpoga, Nigeria and one in Sankera, Nigeria. Run by women from the community, the centres provide clean water that is also collected and recycled for domestic activities. At the same time, education is provided on the responsible use of water to help people get the most from the water available. Since it started, we have seen how this programme empowers women, and how their empowerment can help drive the progress of the whole community, a true example of the ripple effect in action.

We are also piloting an urban service model with social enterprise, NextDrop. This innovative model provides a text service to alert people when water will be available, preventing people from having to wait for water for hours each day. NextDrop and Sunlight are currently piloting this model in Mysore India, and will release successes and learnings later in 2015. We aim to roll this out to other regions and countries with similar water environments.

We are only at the start of our journey but are aiming high and we believe that we as a brand can make a difference. Through our innovative products and sustainable water programmes, we can help millions of women save time every day and help give women back the time they deserve. We ask you to join us to help the millions of women worldwide who are trapped in the daily cycle of walking and waiting for water.

Help us make their voices heard.

Every **woman** counts. Every **second** counts.



# SECONDS SAVED MEAN LIVES CHANGED

Vanita is a thirty-two year old housewife with three sons and one daughter living in Mumbai. Like many women, she spent a significant amount of time each day waiting for water and doing domestic duties like laundry and washing dishes.

When asked about her dreams, she said she did not dream for herself. Instead she said she dreamt for her daughter, and hoped she would have an opportunity for a better life.

She believed education was the only way to stop her daughter inheriting her situation. So, discreetly, Vanita had been using every spare minute to sew clothes to sell at the market. She then used the money to pay her daughter's school fees.

Every extra minute, every day, was helping change her daughter's life.

We want to give more women like Vanita the time to make a difference.



# GIVING BACK WOMEN'S TIME

Several water programmes are operating successfully across the world which are helping women reclaim lost hours every day.

## Water Centre

### Water Centre schemes in Nigeria

Sunlight is working with Oxfam to install and run Water Centre schemes in Nigeria. Based on a social enterprise model, they provide better access to clean, affordable water and thereby reduce the time and effort women spend collecting the unclean alternative. The Water Centres are buildings, located in the heart of the community, that provide on-tap clean water facilities. Currently there are centres established in Okpoga and Sankera, both peri-urban areas in Nigeria. In order for the model to be sustainable, water is sold at a low cost, as is food and household products. The proceeds are used for the ongoing maintenance and management of the Centre.

Currently each Centre provides water to approximately 30,000 people. Of that 30,000, an estimated 6,000 women have the opportunity to reclaim hours of lost time every day. It's known that those who face the problem of access to water – the women in these communities – are essential to solving it. This is why the centres are run by women, for women. It's these

women's innate drive for change, sense of leadership and ownership – combined with the new facilities unlocking access to clean water for them – which has meant the first two Centres have already helped hundreds of women reclaim time: time for themselves, their families and their community.

In these villages, the women used to have to dedicate much of their day to water: walking for water, pumping for water, waiting for water, recovering from carrying heavy water containers over long distances – and at the end of all that, they were still suffering due to the water being unclean.

The Water Centres have helped women take back some of their time – some of their lives - simply by providing water within their reach, close to home. The time that this has unlocked has also provided one of the biggest benefits to women in the community: they can now focus time on improving their small businesses or getting involved in activities that generate additional income.

One local woman, Justina Onyene, has been working at one of the Water Centres. The job has given her an income with which she can support her family. When her father's work was affected by a strike, she paid the school fees for her younger siblings and bought books for them. The skills and experiences gained as part of the social enterprise are having a long term impact on the lives of the women using and working at the Centres.

Just as importantly, her job has instilled her with a sense of pride as she is serving her community. As well as helping her community she is now financially secure and her job has equipped her with the skills to better handle life's challenges.



# AFTER THE WATER CENTRE, EVERYTHING CHANGED

Mnguswn is a 37 year old civil servant in the education department of her local government, as well as a mother of four.

*"Wherever there is poverty, women suffer more than men, because we are the ones looking after the house and the children. So if other women have access to a Water Centre like this they will have enough time for themselves and their families."*

Mnguswn used to walk 2km to the river and another 2km back every day. Because so many people had to do precisely the same thing there was always traffic, so sometimes she would arrive and have to spend 2-3 hours queuing and waiting for her turn to fetch water from the river before starting the journey home.

Fetching water was such a time consuming task that often she didn't manage to prepare food for her children on time. When they came back from school at 2pm she would usually only just have arrived home with her jerry cans. And the amount of water she was able to carry would not be enough to complete all her household activities, so she would have to go back to the river again to prepare for the next day.

This non-stop struggle would leave her and her family exhausted, with no time for all household chores, let alone time to themselves. Their days revolved around water and ensuring they had enough of it.

After the Water Centre opened, everything changed.

The place is almost unrecognisable, she says. Now that it only takes 20-30 minutes to get water, Mnguswn, like everyone in the community, has more time. With cheap, clean, accessible water now available, Mnguswn now spends her time...

...being able to earn a living

...being able to spend more time with her family

...being able to live her life, on her own terms



## CHAPTER 4 - NEXTDROP

# 100 MILLION WOMEN COULD BE SET FREE BY A TEXT

Anu Sridharan, NextDrop, CEO

‘When will we get water today?’ Across India, countless families face this question every day. Millions of households may have a piped water supply, but water only flows through those pipes for a few hours at a time. For women managing households it’s a stressful problem that takes up a huge amount of time.

### The pain of unpredictable water

Mysore is a city of 900,000 million people in Karnataka, India. 10% of the city (about 15,000 families) has access to water 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The rest of Mysore receives water once a

day – for 45 minutes to two hours at a time. It’s a huge problem for women trying to look after families. Houses become cluttered with containers to store enough water for water-intensive chores like washing clothes. Safe water often needs to be topped up by water from unsafe sources. But one of the biggest problems is time. The women of Mysore have no way of knowing when the water will flow. The result is they lose hours each day waiting for those 45 minutes to arrive – a problem made worse by the city’s power outages (one a day on average), sometimes wiping out their daily water supply completely. Solving this water issue at the source is a problem. Water companies lack the technology to monitor and manage their distribution systems effectively, while some 50-70% of urban piped water is lost through unnoticed pipe damage.

Technology has a key role to play in addressing development issues. Across the world, we’re increasingly seeing how technological solutions address social needs in a way that’s simple, cost effective, accessible, and relevant. For NextDrop, the game-changer was the advent of the mobile phone, and the ubiquity of mobile technology. The teledensity (Telephones per 100 people) in India as of June 2010 was 56.83%, with 94.61% of this being wireless<sup>1</sup>. In urban areas, the wireless teledensity is 128.2 %<sup>2</sup> with the number of mobile phone connections in India expecting to grow to more than one billion by 2015<sup>3</sup>. This technological development makes mobile innovation a prime platform for development in the water sector. Especially when it comes to collecting and distributing critical information in real time.

Social Enterprise, NextDrop, is simplifying urban water collection in India with a simple text. It is pioneering a service that sends SMS alerts to subscribers telling them when to expect water – and more importantly when not to expect it: time that women can then spend doing other things at home, outside or with their families.

The idea is simple. Some people have information about water, and others need it. What NextDrop do is serve as a medium, simply crowdsourcing this data and distributing it on the most ubiquitous device - your cell phone. Through an SMS. A human powered smart grid. This information gap exists across multiple sectors, be it water, power, transportation, gas, pension payments, education, you name it. NextDrop want to bridge information gaps for the world’s largest democracy in the most critical sector: water.

## CHAPTER 5 - CONCLUSIONS

# A TIME FOR CHANGE

Now is an opportunity to drive change. For the private, public and third sectors to join forces to lift the weight water places on women’s shoulders, and leave them free to fulfil their ambitions and realise their potential.



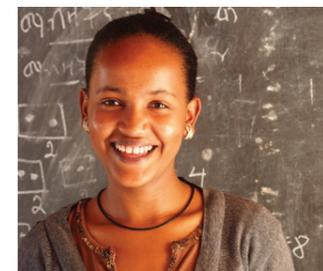
**Girls carry water with their mothers from as young as five.**

**IF** they could spend less time doing this, they could spend more time playing with their family instead.



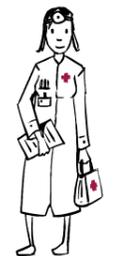
**Marie, who’s 10, is often late for school because she has to collect water every morning.**

**IF** she could spend less time doing this, she could get a more complete education.



**Hareg, who’s 14, has big ambitions – she wants to be a medical doctor. She says that with water everyone has an equal chance.**

**IF** she saves time thanks to water, she can achieve her ambitions.



**Women in Hubli-Dharwad in India have to wait up to 10 days for water.**

**IF** they could spend less time waiting, they could spend more time out of the house. Like Poomima, who proclaimed that saving time through water “set me free [to] do what I want”.



Improving access to water is a complex problem but the impact is significant.

A Sustainable Development Goal focused on water and sanitation will provide a global framework to enable a multi-sector collaboration to address this issue holistically and sustainably.

Only if we work together can we make this become a reality.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

For women in the developing world, lives lived without safe water are challenging and complex but they are far from hopeless.

Reaching everyone, everywhere with access to clean water isn't just a dream. Where the skills and resources of governments, agencies, non-governmental organisations, the private sector and most importantly communities are brought together, a leap forward during the next 15 years is not only realistic, it is achievable. Every sustainable new water point can release more time. Time for girls to finish school, time for women to earn a living, time for everyone to reach their full potential. We all have our part to play to achieve this. From this year, we need:

- United Nations Member States to continue to include a dedicated goal for water and sanitation within the Sustainable Development Goals, with ambitious targets for universal WASH access by 2030.
- Governments to ensure this commitment is reflected in national plans to achieve affordable, sustainable, safe access to water, sanitation and hygiene for everyone as soon as possible and at least by 2030.

- NGOs and civil society must continue to monitor progress and hold governments to account for achieving 100% access to water, sanitation and hygiene, and meaningfully participate in planning, delivering and verifying services.
- Businesses should engage in public-private partnerships to address issues across water, sanitation and hygiene. More actors in the private sector should commit to investing in social development.
- Communities must be involved and given a full role in all decisions that affect their water resources.

We must also ensure that this framework recognises the interlinkages between water sanitation and gender equality. Every last person at every level must be reached. Join the growing support from government, civil society and business, to help achieve this ambition and improve livelihoods.

Time is of the essence – let's work towards giving women the time they deserve.

Every **woman** counts. Every **second** counts.

#WaterforWomen



Jane Wilbur



Jenny Lamb



Hanneke Willenborg



Anu Sridharan



For over a century, Sunlight has been making hygiene and cleanliness affordable, and helping women across the world by easing the burden of household work. By providing superior quality products, Sunlight aims to help women save significant amounts of time, water and effort every time they wash their dishes. In 2014 Sunlight formed partnerships with Oxfam and Next Drop to help women reclaim time lost in collecting or waiting for water. Sunlight believes the more time women unlock from accessing water, the more power they have to make a difference in their world.



Oxfam was founded in Britain in 1942, initially to help the starving population in enemy-occupied Greece during World War Two. Today Oxfam is a global confederation of 17 independent Oxfam with one plan: 'The power of people against poverty'. Together with partners, Oxfam is in over 90 countries tackling poverty and offering emergency relief and long term resilience. Sectors range from water & sanitation, to gender justice, food security and livelihoods, and policy and advocacy. In some instances Oxfam have responded to 24 emergencies at any given time.

Today Oxfam is helping on everything from ebola in Sierra Leone and Liberia, to the food crisis in Yemen, and the conflict and subsequent displacement across the Middle East in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq.



We just wanted to tell people when water was going to turn on. It was a simple question in 2010, asked by some graduates from UC Berkeley but it's grown to so much more. We're still trying to answer the question in even more intelligent ways but this is where we are so far. It's our goal to take water data and make it useful for everyone.

NextDrop imagines a future where every citizen has critical information at their fingertips and can tell us their thoughts on it. We imagine a world where everyone has a voice, especially to say when things are wrong. We imagine smart cities of the future where problems are solved before they exist, and interconnectedness is used to collaborate and push the boundaries of human possibility. Where time is not lost waiting for water.



WaterAid is an international non-governmental organisation focused exclusively on improving poor people's access to safe water, improved hygiene and sanitation.

We work in 26 countries across Africa, Asia, the Pacific region and Central America and campaign globally with our partners to realise our vision of a world where everyone has access to these basic human needs.

To date, we have reached over 21 million people with safe water and over 18 million with sanitation.



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