

THE IMPORTANCE OF CLEAN WATER

A PERSONAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Clean water is essential for improving health outcomes and quality of life. While Tanzania has many large lakes containing fresh water, these aren't evenly distributed across the country, so many people still don't have access to clean, running water making life challenging.

Tanzania's water sources

Water suitable for drinking isn't distributed evenly in Tanzania. While some people have access to fresh water from lakes, others have to rely on groundwater. In addition, rain isn't distributed evenly throughout the year. We have two rainy seasons, and outside of these, we go for long periods without rain.

My life without a tap

As a child, I helped my family walk to the village tap to collect water. This water was used for all of our needs including cooking, washing our clothes, for our showers and for flushing our toilet.

A few years ago, when I was around 28 years of age, a tap was installed a few metres from my home. I share this tap with several other households. It was life changing getting access to water. It meant I could devote more time to other tasks such as studying, working and of course, sleeping in.

I still have to boil the water to kill any harmful bacteria that may be in the water, and I don't any means to **irrigate** my land year round, but my quality of life has vastly improved with installation of that one shared tap.



Figure 2: The shared tap

Rainwater harvesting

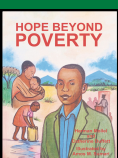
Modern Maasai homes (Figure 1) often have a corrugated iron roof, and the grooves in the iron sheeting can be used to catch rainwater. Homeowners can then bend another piece of iron to serve as a gutter, which can be used to direct rainwater into containers.



Figure 1: Enkajis with corrugated iron roofs

Drinking water that is poisonous

Water in my area has too much **fluoride**. A certain amount of fluoride is helpful because it helps prevent tooth decay. However, too much fluoride causes fluorosis in children, which results in pitting, brown staining, or rough enamel in the adult teeth as they are developing. In some areas, the fluoride levels are so high that they cause more serious issues, such as bone problems, large heads, permanent disabilities, and premature aging.



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Images courtesy of Catherine Duffett