

# Unsafe Water: Children at Risk of Disease and Death




**748  
MILLION**  
people worldwide lack access to clean water.<sup>1</sup>



**EVERY DAY**  
in 2012, more than  
**1,600**  
children under 5 died due to diarrheal diseases caused by a lack of water, sanitation, and hygiene.

It is common for the urban poor to pay up to  
**50 TIMES MORE**  
for a liter of water than their richer neighbors who have access to water mains.

## SITUATION

Edson (above) and many other children in his village in the Twachiyanda region of southern Zambia were once malnourished. They lacked access to clean water, and the dirty water they drank often caused sickness—even death. In addition, many girls spent so much time carrying water long distances for their families that they missed part of the school day.

But since clean water came gushing out of a community borehole drilled in November 2012, life has dramatically changed for Edson’s community. Now 6-year-old Edson wanders through the garden, picks a stem off a green onion—one of his favorite vegetables—and chews it eagerly. People in the village enjoy better nutrition because they have the water to sustain vegetable gardens. Girls spend less time carrying water and more time at school. And families earn enough from surplus harvests to buy school supplies, clothing, and

*(continued)*

other essentials. While Edson's village has been transformed, the struggle to find clean water continues for hundreds of millions of children around the world.

## PLEASE PRAY ...

### ... for improved health.

Water, sanitation, and hygiene programs work together powerfully to prevent the spread of most diseases. The health of children like 4-year-old Munsanje in Twachiyanda has dramatically improved with access to clean water. Along with providing access to safe water sources and improved sanitation, World Vision teaches children critical hygiene skills such as proper handwashing.

*Heavenly Father, please comfort and heal children who suffer from frequent disease due to dirty water. Preserve their lives and bring their communities access to sustainable sources of clean, life-giving water.*

### ... for girls to be freed from burdensome water gathering so they can attend school.

Women and girls are responsible for collecting water in nearly three of every four households throughout sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>4</sup> To complete this chore, girls like 18-year-old Caroline in Twachiyanda would walk three to six miles round trip to a contaminated water source, often making them late to school or unable to attend altogether. Now, thanks to having more time in class, Caroline's grades have improved.

*Lord, just as girls like Caroline have received more classroom and study time by getting clean water nearby, please allow other girls to access clean water close to home.*

### ... for better nutrition for children.

By increasing the rates of infectious disease, particularly diarrhea, contaminated water and poor sanitation contribute to malnutrition among children—reinforcing the vicious cycle of poverty.<sup>5</sup> Today, the Twachiyanda borehole provides enough water for Edson's community to grow a wealth of vegetables. Once malnourished, Edson and other children now have ready access to nutritious foods. Yet millions of children still don't.

*I will pour water  
on the thirsty land,  
and streams on the  
dry ground ...*

—Isaiah 44:3 (NIV)

*Lord, thank You for the clean water that has transformed the food supply for Edson and other children in his community. Please equip other villages with access to water sources so they too can improve their crops and raise healthy children.*

**... for clean water to spur economic growth.**

Every \$1 spent on improving water supply and sanitation produces an economic gain of at least \$5, and as much as \$28.<sup>6</sup> For instance, a new well is helping Francisco Nunez expand his small-scale fish farm in the Dominican Republic, allowing him to earn enough to support his family.

*Father, we are amazed by the ways You bless us through nature. Grant that families in need will be able to access clean water so they may support their loved ones.*

**... that through our work to bring clean water, more people will encounter the living water of Jesus.**

Memory Hadenda, a mother in the Twachiyanda community, had struggled with doubt that God cared for her family. But when a World Vision water team began their fifth attempt at drilling a borehole well, she joined the staff and other community members in praying fervently over the spot. To everyone's great joy, water came spouting from the earth. Through this miracle, Memory says, "I became a person of a lot of faith."

*Jesus, thank you for strengthening Memory's faith by answering her prayers. Remind each of us that faith comes from "confidence in what we hope for" (Hebrews 11:1). Work in hearts to reveal the living water You offer.*

*"The poor and needy search for water,*

*but there is none;*

*their tongues are parched with thirst.*

*But I the Lord will answer them ...*

*I will make rivers flow on barren heights,*

*and springs within the valleys.*

*I will turn the desert into pools of water,*

*and the parched ground into springs."*

—Isaiah 41:17-18

<sup>1</sup>UNICEF & WHO, Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation, 2014, p. 8

<sup>2</sup>UNICEF, Committing to Child Survival: A Promise Renewed, September 2013, pp.19, 25

<sup>3</sup>UNICEF, State of the World's Children, 2012, p. 25

<sup>4</sup>UNICEF & WHO, Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation, 2012, p. 31 (actual figure: 71%)

<sup>5</sup>www.wsp.org/features/events/features/clean-water-and-sanitation-reduce-childhood-malnutrition-and-diarrhea

<sup>6</sup>UNICEF, State of the World's Children, 2012, p. 58