

The Effects of Kenya's Water Shortage By Kevin Chapman

Kenya's prolonged lack of water has forced many people, especially those in rural areas, to walk long distances to draw from water sources. In fact, it is not uncommon for Kenyans to walk around nine miles every just to obtain water from streams and ponds. Usually, women and children must travel to collect water, rendering them vulnerable to predators and harsh weather. Worse still, many children must forsake an education to fetch water, greatly reducing their opportunities in life.

To add insult to injury, the sparse water supplies of rural Kenya are often contaminated, yet lots of Kenyans have no other choice but to drink from them in order to survive. The practice of consuming unclean water poses a serious threat to the health of many people. Outbreaks of diseases such as typhoid, cholera, and dysentery are common. In addition, lakes that some people use as water sources can serve as habitats for malaria-carrying mosquitoes. Malaria is one of Kenya's most significant health issues, as it leads to the deaths of around 10,700 Kenyans each year. Furthermore, pathogens in water commonly cause diarrhea, which is often fatal due to severe dehydration. The myriad of diseases Kenyans contract from polluted water sources significantly contribute to Kenya's high under-five child mortality rate: 43 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2019.

Water scarcity in Kenya has grave consequences for its people. We must act quickly yet prudently to enact sustainable long-term solutions that will help ease this pressing issue. Working to provide more Kenyans with access to clean water would be of enormous benefit to a large number of people and communities.

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