

1. Before you read the text, look at the title and briefly discuss what you think the text will be about.
2. While you read the text, underline any information that might help you in your poster. Remember, the poster is designed to encourage people to act. Each text has one example of this kind already underlined.
3. After you have read the text, discuss and agree a list of key pieces of information to use in the poster.

The water crisis – what are the big issues?

The facts about the water crisis are very shocking. According to the British charity WaterAid, <https://www.wateraid.org/uk/>, around 785 million people do not have clean water in or near their houses, for drinking or washing. That's about ten per cent of the global population. But why is this important?

The serious effects of the water crisis can be seen in four ways: the effect on people's health, on their education, on their financial situation and on the stability of their community. Let's look at these four issues one by one.

Health

Water is used to keep clean, and keeping clean is key to good health. For example, a simple cut to a child's leg can be treated by washing it, to avoid infections. Where there is no clean water, that simple cut can become a serious medical condition. Equally, washing hands with clean water after using the toilet will help stop the spread of fatal diseases.

Education

Children who are not healthy or who have to walk a long way to collect water are less likely to attend full-time education, and those with unhealthy families at home are less likely to be able to study to the level required to get to college or university. This lack of education contributes to poor sanitation and hygiene. This creates a vicious circle. This problem is particularly bad for girls, who tend to be the families' members who walk a long way to collect water.

Money

Low standards of education make it much more difficult for people get jobs that are both well paid and secure. Without money from employment, it is difficult for communities to develop their water supply and sanitation. In addition, where family members need to spend a lot of time collecting water and carrying it home, they cannot take full-time jobs even if they are available. As mentioned above, this particularly impacts on women and girls.

Political stability

Water is a basic resource that is central to health and well-being. Because of this, it is often a source of conflict and even wars. The stability of a whole region or even a country can be in danger because of a shortage of clean water. To try and decrease the impact of the water crisis, the United Nations has a Sustainable Development Goal (number 6) that specifically refers to water and sanitation.

