Madelyn Miracle
Jim Claypool Art & Conservation
Stuck in Shallow Water
November 23, 2021

Stuck in Shallow Water

Here, we have water. We have it in our sinks and in our bottles. We have it whenever we need it. Eight thousand miles away in tribal Africa, water is considered a luxury. Here, the journey for water would be as simple as walking downstairs to the refrigerator. In Kenya, Africa, millions of women and young girls have to venture miles away from home to find water. When they finally do find it, they are then tasked with returning home (Hallett). Maybe water conservation doesn’t seem like a big deal to us, but to the population of cities like Northern Kenya, it could be a matter of life or death.

It is undeniable that all citizens could put forth stronger efforts to save water. Truly, it comes down to whether or not we want to. Simple things such as turning off the tap while you brush your teeth, or taking shorter showers could be very beneficial to water-scarce environments (wwf.org). In addition, studies have shown that switching from bottled water to tap can salvage not only water but also thousands of dollars. A record of 1.3 billion water bottles were purchased every day in 2019 (waterbottle.io). As you can imagine, ditching bottled water would be beneficial to everybody involved.

Florence Okomo, the president of Shisango Girls School in Kenya, speaks to TheWaterProject about her daily life. “They (the students of Shisango) are forced to go to the
stream. It is one hour to go and to come back.” She continues, stating, “...sometimes they shiver in class until they are not able to control it.” Okomo’s words are very real and bereft. Younger girls, typically under the age of fifteen, are usually responsible for fetching water. This duty can be very tiresome, dangerous, and time consuming, depending on where these children reside. Having to bear the responsibility of fetching heavy buckets of water at all times of the year, and in all climates would explain why the young girls of Shisango shiver during class (thewaterproject.org). Okomo and her students’ experiences are evident enough that if something can change within first world countries, life for citizens in water-scarce situations can exceed.

Despite the major water shortage in Africa, they are not the only country that will suffer. The United States Environmental Protection Agency has estimated that forty states will bear water shortages by 2024. The EPA has also determined that two facilities are responsible for exploiting what water we do have in America: offices and laboratories. For office buildings, plumbing, heating, cooling, and irrigation are responsible for the substantial amounts of water being used. For laboratories, water is put towards sterilization and purification (epa.gov). Knowing that life for Americans will change so soon if nothing is done is alarming, and further supports why development must persist.

Although most people are taught both to save water and why it is important to not waste it, few take action towards the thought. Amla Ruia, on the other hand, has put forth strong efforts to conserve water for Rajasthan, India. Her view of creating a sustainable and permanent solution for conserving water has inspired her to use many water harvesting techniques and to build check dams. In fact, Ruia even founded Aakar Charitable Trust, an organization that has constructed
hundreds of dams and restored close to one hundred villages in Rajasthan. Ruia is an inspiring woman who can serve as a role model to millions of people who share a desire to protect the environment by retaining water (Singh).

There are an astounding amount of ways citizens can save water, which can in return save money and energy. The American Rivers Organization suggests monitoring water bills, fixing leaks around the house, and installing a dual flush or low flow toilet to conserve water. However, there are even more creative ways to inspire people to conserve water, like harvesting rainwater for gardens on hot days; using your pet’s water bowl to water plants; composting fruits and vegetables instead of using the garbage disposal; and even putting ice cubes from an empty glass in the house plants (Cartwright). Ultimately, no approach to water conservation is unmindful and even the tiniest changes can save lives.

Overall, if communities work together to protect the environment and retrench water, people and entire countries alike can flourish as a result. There is an abundance to be done pertaining to the conservation of water, which will serve as prosperity to our environment and our planet. If more people can act now such as Florence Okomo, Amla Ruia, and others, we can protect thousands, even millions, of people and serve righteousness for our planet.

Word count: 939
Works Cited:


