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QUESTION & ANSWER



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Why is the water crisis such an important issue for women and girls in Sub-Saharan Africa?

Women in Sub-Saharan Africa are disproportionately affected by a lack of access to clean water. These women face adolescence and childhood disease, pregnancy and childbirth without clean water. Adding an even further burden, in much of Africa it is considered culturally a woman's job to carry water. Many girls suffer developmental deformities from carrying heavy loads at a very young age.

Girls must often leave school to help their mothers carry water when their families grow too large. If they are lucky enough to stay in school, they'll likely drop out at puberty because they don't have hygiene facilities at school. Then, because a teenage girl is not in school, the cycle starts again. She will likely be married young, she will walk long distances carrying heavy containers of water throughout her pregnancy, hope to survive childbirth... and so it goes on. Therefore, investing in clean water is a way of investing in the future of women and girls.

The Voss Foundation's mission is not just about women, but about communities—we've changed over 100,000 lives in Sub-Saharan Africa with clean water. We involve the local community in the implementation of each project. We teach

the members of the community about hygiene, sanitation, and water usage practices to ensure the clean water is used effectively and responsibly.

Some of our most fulfilling projects have been those where we built water systems at schools in Kenya, DR Congo, and Liberia. These projects allow girls to continue their education and shift the power dynamics of a community. Whenever we build a well, we save lives with clean water right away. But it's the subsequent outcomes, what we call "the ripple effect of clean water," enabling women and girls to improve their own lives and transform the community, which really thrills us.