

# WaterDrops

Your WaterAid Canada Magazine  
Winter 2019



WaterAid/ Genaye Eshetu

Together we are  
changing normal.



**WaterAid**





## From women's hockey to women's equality in India

WaterAid/ Prashanth Vishwanathan

**The Indian capital is both stunning and chaotic – the winding streets, grand boulevards and stately buildings all making a wonderful first impression as I arrived in India for the first time. I have always wanted to visit India and was excited and anxious to travel here with WaterAid Canada.**

As a professional hockey player and member of Canada's national women's ice hockey team I have been fortunate to travel the world competing for my country, but this trip was different. I wasn't here for training or competition, I was in India as a WaterAid Canada Ambassador.

After having encountered WaterAid on a previous project, I saw that my passion and beliefs fit perfectly with WaterAid's mission, so I decided to become a WaterAid Ambassador. As an ambassador I raise awareness of their important mission to make clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene normal for everyone, everywhere.

WaterAid Canada invited me to India to see first-hand the situation of women and girls who lack access to clean water and decent toilets. From Delhi we took a two-hour flight to Bihar State, where I immediately saw the reality of what it is to live without regular access to clean water. A long and uneven road connects the village of Churaman Nagar to the nearest city, Gaya, which offered a sharp contrast to the grand boulevards of New Delhi. Churaman Nagar is a 140-household village of predominately mud huts, where the 650 village inhabitants are among India's most socially and economically marginalized. In this remote village we met a remarkable woman, Shoba Devi, 35.

Shoba is a small woman, with a slim build and a beautiful white smile. She appears unassuming but is incredibly smart, tough, and determined. As we sat in her family's one-room home, we spoke about her daily life and the many challenges she faces.



Shoba moved to Churaman Nagar from Gaya in 2001, when she married her husband Sanjay, 37. Shoba is the sole caregiver to her three children ages 5, 7, 10. Her husband Sanjay lives and works as a daily wage labourer in Chennai, more than 2,000 km away.

Sanjay stopped sending money back to Shoba and the children last year and she is uncertain if he will send money again. For the past year Shoba has been working as a daily wage labourer, mixing cement in a nearby district. She was working seven days a week, only making around \$5 a day, in order to feed her family and save money for a house. Shoba anxiously wants a house, her own place to live to provide her and her children a safe home. She is constantly worried that the authorities will evict her family from the unauthorized land her house is built on, leaving them with nowhere to go.

I was very sorry to hear from Shoba that her work mixing cement has recently stopped, and that her family has been suffering. It's very difficult to find work in the Churaman Nagar area, which has meant that Shoba had no choice but to start working as a labourer in a quarry doing the extremely dangerous job of cutting stone. Shoba symbolizes the enormous potential that could be unleashed if women and girls in this village had access to economic opportunities and basic resources — like water, healthcare and education. When women are given opportunities, alongside resources and decision-making power, they not only improve their lives, but the lives of their families specifically their children and their communities.

Like many women in India, Shoba is the family's water carrier. The village has intermittent electricity, which means that the water tap outside Shoba's house works sporadically. When there is no electricity Shoba must walk 30 minutes, five times a day, to a distant water source where she stands in line to collect two buckets of water and then carries them back home. Churaman Nagar faces significant challenges, providing safe and sustainable access to clean water. The area is highly susceptible to recurrent drought in the summer, is suffering from the effects of climate change and due to its rocky geographic location chemicals seep into the soil, contaminating the ground water. As I witnessed, it's the poorest communities like, Churaman Nagar, that are impacted first, and most devastatingly, by climate change.



WaterAid/ Prashanth Vishwanathan



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Shoba, like most villagers, prefers to use the water from the water tap outside her home, as it affords her the time that she would usually spend collecting water. The water tap is the community's source of water for drinking, washing, cooking, and bathing. Unfortunately, the water is heavily contaminated with fluoride, making these families extremely ill after prolonged consumption.

As I saw for myself, many adults and children in Churaman Nagar have physical deformities, including bowed legs, due to fluorosis, which is caused by drinking water that contains dangerous levels of fluoride. In Churaman Nagar, the ground water that comes from the water tap, which is overseen by the local village council, has 16 times the acceptable level of fluoride.

"The water is hard, it does not have a good taste, and it effects our children," said Shoba. She doesn't know why the water affects her community negatively, she only knows that "children go lame from drinking the water." She may not know how the water is contaminated, but she explained "the water is not good, but we cannot survive so we will drink it." For most of us, it is difficult to imagine what it is like to live without clean water; drinking a glass of clean water is something we take for granted.

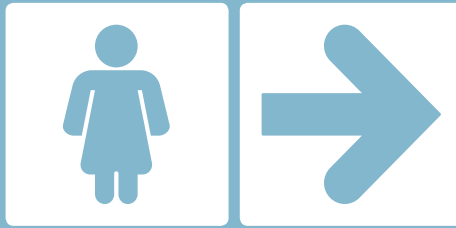
Fortunately, Shoba's children are still healthy and haven't been affected by the fluoride exposure, but she worries that overtime her children will develop severe health problems, like many other children in the village. She told us her hopes are for her children to grow up healthy and have a better life than the one she's had. She insists her daughter, Mamta, 10, attend school instead of doing chores, working or collecting water. Mamta dreams of being a nurse and knows her only opportunity to leave the village will be through either marriage or education. Shoba hopes education will grant Mamta a better life and prays all her children will get the education she did not; Shoba believes that "nothing but education can change my children's life."

Traveling with WaterAid Canada to India, where I had the opportunity to visit communities full of wonderful people like Shoba, was a great privileged. The trip opened my eyes to a world beyond my own. I hope that my partnership with WaterAid Canada continues to provide me with opportunities to share these stories with others to raise awareness of the need for clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene for people like Shoba and her family. ●



By Natalie Spooner,  
Canadian Women's  
National Hockey Team

# WaterAid at Women Deliver



The 2019 Women Deliver Conference, a triennial event held this year focusing on women's and girls' rights, health and wellbeing, was held from June 3–6 in Vancouver, Canada. Approximately 8,000 delegates, media and world leaders attended, and WaterAid was there to show how water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) are critical to tackling gender inequality and ensuring the power and autonomy of women and girls, everywhere.

Our delegation included participants from ten countries and five continents across the global WaterAid federation. The overarching aim of our engagement was to demonstrate and share our experiences on WASH and gender equality.

We participated in numerous activities throughout the conference and associated events, including presentations, panels, hosting a booth in the exhibition hall featuring art from Ethiopian artist Aida Muluneh, leading an official side event on WASH – Power and Gender, and a concurrent session on Water and Energy. WASH and Menstrual Hygiene Management featured strongly throughout the conference, in part due to our presence given we were one of the few WASH organizations in attendance. It was an important opportunity to reflect on the role of the WASH sector in contributing to gender equality and health outcomes for women, but also to learn how to better design, monitor and evaluate our work through a gender lens. ●





# The State of the World's Water

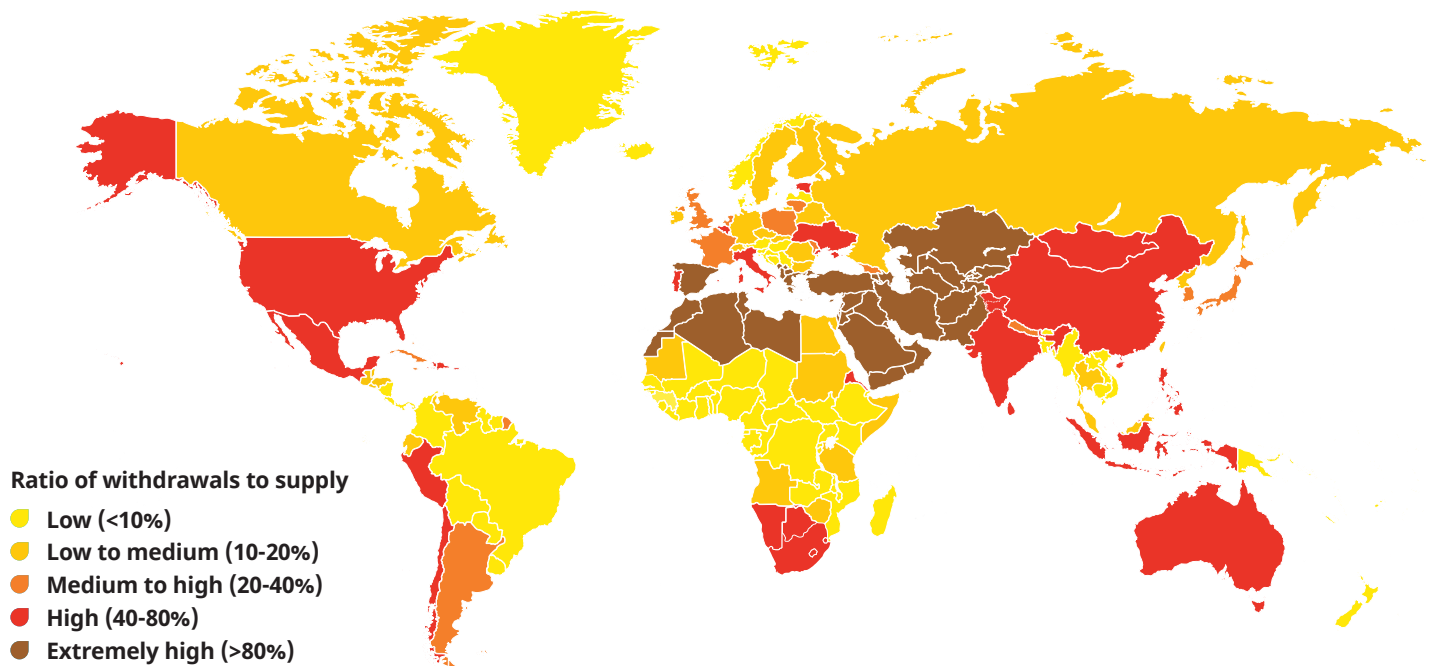
By WaterAid Canada's Communications Manager

**If a bucket contained all the world's water one teacup of that would be freshwater, and just one teaspoon of that would be available for us to use, from lakes, rivers and underwater reservoirs as groundwater. In theory, this is enough to meet all the daily, basic needs of everyone around the world. Yet one in nine people do not have access to clean water close to home.**

Water scarcity exists for two reasons. Physical scarcity, which means there isn't enough water to go around for at least part of the year; demand for water exceeds supply. Socio-economic scarcity, which means that while water is present, it isn't available to all because of a lack of investment and political will<sup>4</sup>. Whether you are able to access water for drinking, cooking, washing and other daily needs depends not only on where you live, but who you are.



## Water stress by country: 2040



Today, approximately 4 billion people live in areas of physical water scarcity and, largely due to climate change and the growing demand for water resources, this number is growing. By 2040, 33 countries are predicted to face extremely high levels of water stress, and many others – including India, China, Southern Africa, USA and Australia – will face high water stress.

In 2015 the global community committed to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); Goal 6 promises that by 2030 everyone, everywhere will have access to a safe and affordable supply of clean water. But progress on delivering safe drinking water to all is threatened by a lack of political will from governments; the financing required to deliver on this goal; by the competing demands from industry and agriculture; and by climatic changes resulting from global warming. As the number of people living in physically water-scarce areas is predicted to rise to 5 billion by 2050, the global promise set by the SDGs is made even more important, yet even more challenging.

WaterAid's *Beneath the Surface: The State of the World's Water 2019* report sheds light on global water scarcity and how everyone, everywhere can be involved in helping to ensure access to water for basic needs is prioritized. To read the full report visit: <https://washmatters.wateraid.org/publications/beneath-the-surface-the-state-of-the-worlds-water-2019>

## What must be done?

**The consequences of water scarcity are global and require a global response. Urgent attention must be given to ensuring that the push for economic development does not expose current and future generations' access to water.**

- 1. Governments** must prioritize the human right to clean water, while ensuring effective regulation and monitoring for sustainable water use and safely managed sanitation.
- 2. Businesses** and investors must actively look at the threats that water shortages pose to their future growth; they must influence decision-makers and water utility service providers to ensure that their workers, and their neighbors, have a reliable supply of clean water.
- 3. Companies** must investigate the impact that their activities have on water and actively reduce the amount of water used in their production chain.
- 4. Consumers** must drive change with their purchasing power. Thinking about what you buy and where it comes from, eating less meat, reducing food waste and simply buying less can all be excellent ways to reduce our water footprints. ●



# Empowering women in Madagascar with Collega + AVEDA Canada

By WaterAid Canada's Communications Manager



**It's mid-morning in Ambodiranonambilona, a small isolated village in central Madagascar. The sun is hot, the air is dusty. The local community is engaged in their daily activities; some men are heading off to work in the rice fields, the children are playing together, and the women are working – many are weaving basket, some tending to animals and others hanging washing out to dry. This village in Madagascar is where the team from AVEDA Canada and I met two remarkable women, Mama Lenenia and Mama Justine.**

Lenenia is a sweet and gentle woman in her mid-60's. Her husband died many years ago, her five adult children work outside the village and she is the sole caregiver to her four grandchildren ages 3 to 11. As we sat in her family's two-room home, we spoke about her daily life and the many challenges she faces. Like many women in Madagascar, Lenenia is the family's water-carrier. Five times a day, Lenenia walks barefoot to a remote water source from where she carries water back to her family home. As her grandchildren grow, so does their daily need for water; she shares with us her





We walked with Lenenia, Justine and four other women through the village, along a dirt road, into the bushes and down a steep hill on their daily water trip. About one kilometer away, we arrived at the local water source. The water source is a murky watering hole.

The water runs down the side of a hill through several villages before arriving in Ambodiranonambilona. This is where the community women collect water for drinking, washing, cooking, and bathing. The water is contaminated, inevitably making these women, and their families, especially the children ill. Every day, they walk to this water source located more than 20 minutes from their home and then back home again balancing a 20-pound plastic water jug on their head.

concern about having to, make the water trek as she grows older. We asked Lenenia what she hopes for the future. Her answer heartfelt and concise was, “for my grandchildren to have clean water so they won’t endure what I have gone through”.

A short walk away we met Justine in the shade outside her home, crouching on one of her homemade mats, her fingers moving steadily as she winds the grass into intricate patterns. Since she was a young girl she has been weaving, a tradition that has been passed down from generation to generation. Justine sells her woven baskets and mats in the local market to support her husband and eight children. Weaving provides Justine an opportunity to earn an income. However, because she must fetch water three times a day, her time spent weaving is limited and so is her ability to earn an income. I asked her what she hopes for the future, she responded, “time.”

With access to clean water she will be able to spend more time on her craft. Justine is incredibly strong, resilient and determined. She epitomizes the great potential of Malagasy women and girls, if they were relieved of the daily, time-consuming duty of collecting water. These women would have time to start small businesses; learn to read and write; and spend time with their families.

A long and bumpy road connects the village to the nearest town, Moramanga, which seems like a lifetime away. The drive takes three hours, winding through beautiful, lush, and rugged terrain. Ambodiranonambilona, like so many villages in which we work, is remote, neglected, extremely poor and it is the women and girls who disproportionately bear the burden of collecting water.

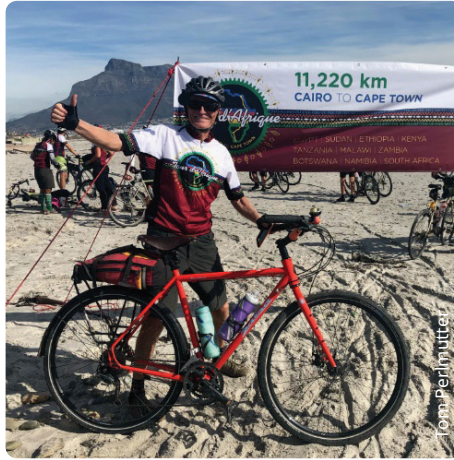
As we walked, the women shared with us their worries and their hopes for the future. Their wishes were simple: they only wanted good health and education for their children and grandchildren so that they could work towards their own dreams. Access to clean water is the first step in achieving this; access to clean water transforms lives for the better. Since they were young girls, these women, and millions like them, have spent countless hours walking for water. In the developing world, women like Lenenia and Justine collectively spend as many as 200 million hours fetching water every single day.

For most of us, in Canada it is difficult to imagine what it is like to live like without clean water. Most of us take for granted being able to drink a glass of clean water. Having access to safe, clean water is transformative. It opens doors to education, health, nutrition and offers women and girls opportunities to fully contribute to their communities.

The good news is through the support of AVEDA’s Earth Month Campaign, WaterAid is currently working on bringing clean water to Ambodiranonambilona with a gravity fed water system that will bring water to hundreds of people for the very first time in their lives. By March 2020, all residents of Ambodiranonambilona village will have access to safe drinking water as well as access to toilets.

The arrival of clean water in Ambodiranonambilona, will bring relief to Lenenia and Justine from the daily labor of collecting water. Moreover, it will be their children and grandchildren who will greatly benefit. With clean water, Lenenia and Justine’s dreams for their children and grandchildren will soon be a reality. ●

## Our Community Supporters



### UrineTown The Musical by We Are Here Productions

We Are Here Productions is a Toronto-based not-for-profit theatre company that aims to turn art into tangible aid for those in need around the world. This year, they used their creativity, talents and time to help provide clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene to communities around the world with their performance of UrineTown The Musical. Their 3-night run raised a \$4000 for WaterAid Canada.

### Tom and Jackie's Bicycle Tour D'Afrique

Tom Perlmutter & Jackie Silverberg are not only enthusiastic cyclists, they are also deeply aware of the need for universal access to clean water and sanitation. In early 2019 they united their passions and set off on a cycling journey across Africa to raise money for WaterAid Canada. Tom cycled from Cairo, Egypt to Cape Town, South Africa and Jackie from Cairo, Egypt to Khartoum, Sudan.

Through the deserts of Sudan, to the mountain highlands of Ethiopia and the Tanzanian Rift Valley, they pedaled their way to raising \$8,713 for WaterAid Canada.





## Pat's Well Wishers 95th birthday party

At age ninety-five, Pat was a force. She heard about an injustice; she wrestled with it and came up with a solution.

When she learned about the need for clean water and sanitation in Tanzania, she wanted to help. So, to celebrate her 95th birthday, Pat invited friends and family to donate to WaterAid Canada. She explained she didn't need cards or presents; she wanted to raise awareness and money for women and girls in Africa whom she saw as the traditional water carriers.

Together they raised more than \$21,000! Pat's hope was that the money raised would help build a well in Tanzania to enable young girls go to school instead of being burdened by the daily task of carrying water.

WaterAid Canada was sorry to hear of Pat's passing earlier this fall. We send our condolences to her family and friends.

## Bethlehem Catholic High School

This year, Bethlehem Catholic High School in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, held their 10th annual Cake Auction as a fundraiser for WaterAid Canada. Organized by the student-led Justice Squad, and with the help of an auctioneer, 1,100 students and staff participated in the auction by pooling their money to bid on home-baked cakes which sold for upwards of \$300. Students were also able to participate by voting for their favourite cakes. Student cake bakers were awarded prizes for most original, most colourful, most appetizing and cake of the Year. This year the Justice Squad upped the ante by recruiting five staff members to jump into a pool if they met or exceeded their fundraising target. And they did just that, raising \$2200. ●

For more stories and to join the conversation visit [wateraid.org/ca](http://wateraid.org/ca) or find us at WaterAid Canada on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.



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WaterAid Canada is the Canadian member of WaterAid. WaterAid is an international not-for-profit, determined to make clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene normal for everyone, everywhere within a generation.



# When you leave a gift in your Will, you are leaving a gift that will last a lifetime



For more information please contact Mr. Paul Dickson at 613-230-5182.

**We understand that making a decision about your Will is a private and personal matter, one made after careful consideration. Ensuring that your loved ones are provided for when you are no longer here should be your primary consideration. But, it can also be a special way of remembering an organization you care about – an organization that has been important in your life.**

As a current supporter of WaterAid Canada, you have already helped improve the lives of millions of people in some of the toughest places in the world. In spite of that, today on our planet one in nine people do not have clean water close to their homes and one in three people do not have a decent toilet of their own. A legacy gift will fund practical solutions and transform lives for the better, reaching everyone, everywhere within a generation.

**If you leave a legacy gift in your Will to WaterAid Canada, we will make these commitments to you:**

- **We promise accountability:** you can be assured that WaterAid Canada will meet the highest standards for charities as designated by Imagine Canada.
- **We promise impact:** you can be assured that WaterAid Canada will aim to achieve the highest possible impact on the lives of people where we work.
- **We promise privacy** should you choose to keep the legacy gift private.
- **We promise to communicate with your loved ones,** should you choose to update them on the progress of WaterAid Canada's projects and the impact they are having on people around the world.

Thank you for considering leaving a legacy gift to WaterAid Canada. By working together, we will provide clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene to everyone, everywhere by 2030.

Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to:



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