

# Clean water changes everything



## Before you read

Look at the picture with a partner. Use words from the word list below to describe what you see. Then, tell the class.

bottle | canister | fill | fresh | hand pump | village | water point | well

Four in ten people in the Ethiopian countryside don't have access to clean water. There aren't many wells, and springs and water holes are often severely contaminated. Drinking or washing with dirty water causes diseases such as diarrhoea or dangerous eye infections.

"My mother used to get ill because she drank the contaminated water. Now that the water is clean, no one gets ill any more," says Birhane, a ten-year-old girl who lives in a village in the region of Bakanisa. In Ethiopia, it falls mainly to women and girls to fetch water. They must walk to the nearest water point — which can be several hours away — and carry the heavy containers back home. Birhane fetches water in a 20-litre canister in the morning and after school. "People built a water point for us nearby," Birhane explains. "Now, we have a place where we can shower and wash our clothes."

The people who built the water scheme were from *Menschen für Menschen*. The aid organization, which was founded by actor Karlheinz Böhm in 1981, works with communities to create access to clean drinking water. They build hand-dug wells and spring developments which are looked after and kept clean by members of the community. A water committee, chosen by the inhabitants of the village, is trained by *Menschen für Menschen* to take care of the water point.

A well provides a community with a safe source of drinking water, and clean water keeps people healthy. With a well nearby, children no longer have to walk long distances to fetch water, which means they can go to school and have better chances for the future. And women have time to attend training

courses or generate income by taking part in microcredit programmes offered by *Menschen für Menschen*.

"When I come home from school, I play with friends and look after the cattle," says Birhane. "In the future, I want to follow the path that offers me happiness." What a difference access to clean water makes.

Source:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFKP6GIhxjI>



## Words matter

Read the text. Match the English words with the German words.

- |                     |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| A. aid organization | 1. Bewohner(in)      |
| B. cattle           | 2. Brunnen           |
| C. committee        | 3. Gemeinde          |
| D. community        | 4. Hilfsorganisation |
| E. contaminated     | 5. Komitee           |
| F. inhabitant       | 6. Quelle            |
| G. spring           | 7. verschmutzt       |
| H. well             | 8. Vieh              |

## ANSWERS

### Before you read

Suggestion: The photograph shows a group of girls standing around a **hand pump / well / water point**. Four girls are waiting while a small girl **fills** a big **bottle** with water. The water looks **fresh** and clean. The other girls are waiting to fill their large yellow **canisters** with water. I can see trees and a man in the background of the picture. I think the photo was taken in a **village** in Africa.

### Words matter

A-4; B-8; C-5; D-3; E-7; F-1; G-6; H-2

### True or false?

- A. false (In Ethiopia, four in ten people don't have access to clean water.)  
 B. true

## True or false?

Read the text. Are the sentences true or false?

- A. In Ethiopia, one in ten people don't have access to clean water. \_\_\_\_\_  
 B. Contaminated water can cause dangerous diseases. \_\_\_\_\_  
 C. Birhane's mother gets ill when she drinks the water. \_\_\_\_\_  
 D. Birhane has to walk several hours to the nearest water point. \_\_\_\_\_  
 E. *Menschen für Menschen* is an aid organization that creates access to clean drinking water. \_\_\_\_\_  
 F. Members of the community look after the well and keep it clean. \_\_\_\_\_

## A brighter future

Read the text again, then answer the questions.

- A. Where and when does Birhane fetch water?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 B. What is a "water committee"?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 C. How do wells improve the lives of women and children?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 D. How has access to clean water improved Birhane's life?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## Find out more

Visit <https://highfive4life.de/> and find out more about the way access to water changes people's lives in Ethiopia.



In Kooperation mit:



- C. false (Birhane's mother used to get ill when she drank the water.)  
 D. false (Birhane doesn't have to walk far to the nearest water point.)  
 E. true  
 F. true

### A brighter future

- A. Birhane fetches water from the new well in the mornings and after school.  
 B. A "water committee" is a group of inhabitants elected by members of the community who are trained by *Menschen für Menschen* to maintain and clean the water point.  
 C. Children don't have to walk far to fetch water any more, which means they can go to school and will have a better future. Women have more time to take part in

training courses or make money by taking part in microcredit programmes.

- D. Birhane no longer has to worry about her mother becoming ill. She has more time to go to play with her friends and go to school. She also has access to facilities where she can shower and wash clothes.

### Find out more

One well supplies approximately 200 people with clean water. In Ethiopia, every person's daily water usage is about 20 litres. In comparison, in Germany, every person uses about 121 litres per day.