

Susan Schwickerath
New Hampton High School
New Hampton, Iowa
Iraq, Factor 2: Water Scarcity

Iraq and Water Scarcity

Imagine living in the middle of a desert with a family, the children are hungry and thirsty and will not stop crying. As they look they are able to find some food, but not water. Iraq is in a shortage for water and all the supplies were used up yesterday. How is this going to affect everyone and how is it going to be fixed? Everyone has a thirst. Some thirst for fame, others knowledge, yet others thirst for water. In our world today many people have time to worry about little details and some do not even have time to worry about where their next drink is coming from. In Iraq people are going through this situation. Many do not have water and many do not know where their next drink is coming from. Many do not know how to get more water and do not have the government's support to help them. There have been many people around the world have taken advantage of having water and not being able to worry about knowing when will get to drink next or take long showers. Sometimes they forget to stop and think about the people that are struggling and only worry about themselves. In Iraq today there are many people living day to day not having enough water to drink or water to give to their families. Sometimes, the world need to take a step back and look at the way people live, understand their problems, and learn how to help them and start to make an impact on the world.

1. Iraqi Living

In Iraq there are 32,580,000 people living in 168,754 square miles. That equals about 193 people living in each square mile, which is about 13 families living in one area together. Families in Iraq are very comfortable being with each other and each family lives close or with each other. They are living in home that are made out of mud and brick (Madam. Web.) These houses are not very complex. Families have a lot of traditions and to speak badly about someone or to speak about what has happened is looked badly upon. They are loyal to each other. A typical family, consisting of the man of the house, which is usually the senior or oldest male, the mother, all the children, married and unmarried, and the grandparents typically of the father will live together(Wiki. Web). They also have many extended family living together which includes cousins, aunts, uncles, and grandparents and they will consist of anywhere from one to three generations. Women have been expected to work just like the men, but women would have more of the supervisor positions and in office work while men were doing manual labor. Each roll of the family is clearly defined. They believe that the older the age the wiser people are or become. The men and women are segregated while eating dinner and sleeping(Metz. Web). During meals, they normally have a variety of food with the staple food being rice. Rice is served at almost every meal. They will also have a variety of fruits and vegetables. They will have a main dish of either lamb or tomato soup or dishes big enough to pass around throughout the whole family (Food. Web).

Accessing health care in Iraq that is relatively simple. Iraq is broke into 118 different health sections, and primarily 200,000 people get health care in each section. There are also Public Health Centers around the country which anyone has access to. The literacy rate for the country is 70%. They are able to read and write but not as many will attend school past very early grades. Only nine percent of the citizens finish a secondary school. The education rate is slowly increasing. Not many are able to finish school, because they need to start working and help make money for their families (Ragland. Web).

Mining for oil is the main source of income for Iraq. It makes up 95% of the exchange earning of exporting items. They have a secure pipeline that travels throughout the country. On average, a person that mines oil will make about 18 to 30 dollars an hour. The other important jobs in the country include management and retail sale. On average, they will make enough money to not only support themselves as

well as their family. They will make about 3,000,000 dollars in Iraqi currency which is equal to over to about 2,000 in the United States dollar (Salary. Web).

2. Problems

Iraq is not only facing a water shortage, they are also facing the fact that the water is not sanitary, rising temperatures, and just finished a war in the country. Most of the water is not able to be drank because, the drinking water is also connected to the sewage water. Both tend to not work constantly and have quite a few failures. It has made over thousands sick and die from it. The sanitary water and the water scarcity tie in very closely because, there is only a certain amount of water for people to drink, and every time they get something to drink does not always mean it will be a clean and healthy drink for them to have. The rising temperatures have also affected the water problems in Iraq. Many people have started moving into cities, because they are not able to get water out in the countryside. Having the rise in temperature means that the rivers will also be evaporating the water. The rising temperatures are making it harder to get the correct amount of water that each person, all the plants, and animals need. From March 2003 until December 2011 Iraq was at war with the United States. This affected the water scarcity because the Americans were trying to help the refugees get water. It also meant bad for some of the countryside. There was bombings and battles taking place and tearing up farm land and towns. They were not able to continue normal living and be able to go out and tend to their crops or get supplies as they needed them (Situation. Web).

3. Water Shortage

Iraq relies a lot on the Euphrates and Tigris River for water, but the country of Turkey is cutting the flow of water able to get in and out of the country. In both rivers they are 50% to 70% lower than the normal height of what is supposed to be compared to what they were ten years ago. They have not been back up to normal height because of the dams in Turkey keeping the water from the heavy rain falls and melting snow. This a threat to the farm lands because it turns them into dust and it makes them hard to keep agricultural production going. It also starts sand and dust storms, due to the marshlands and wetlands drying out(Davis. Web).

Water has been something that is not a luxury for people in foreign countries. The rainfall has been greater over the past few years than it has in history, but with the lack of the government support it has failed to help keep the underground canals stable along with the dams. Not only has the government not been able to do that, but the farmers do not have the correct irrigation methods to produce the crops that they need. They have experienced drought and are unable to keep farming and producing rice. With that the country has had to start importing goods from different countries. In 2009 25% of the country was producing crops which made up ten percent of the countries food sources. 90% of the food has to be imported, because in 2003 the UN cut off most of the nation's developments. Many people have been forced off their farms and are unable to get more jobs (Chulov. Web).

In 2013 many more people are able to get access to water, yet many are not. In many large cities, including Baghdad there are many arguments about water access and who gets to use it. The government's lack of support has put them in the situation that they are in. If there is no change to the conditions, by the year 2015 the water will become very hard to get or it will be gone. They will not be able to farm and support their country's food needs (Madam. Web).

To help get more water into the country would help immensely because it would restore farm land and let many families return to their farms. It would also help Iraq to use their own goods rather than import from other countries and support locals markets and stores. It would also help the larger cities struggling to have enough water to drink. They would be able keep separate water systems and not have to worry about sanitary issues (Environmentalists. Web).

In Iraq it is difficult to get any sources of water without the support of the local government. The people are not always able to help the government, because they are working on bigger issues to improve on. That is not the only factor that will affect not getting water, it will also include if they are able to get the support from other countries and people that are willing to help them (Factsheet. Web).

4. The Results

By getting more water into the country people are able to return to their farm and start planting again and helping their economy become stronger. Instead of Iraq providing just ten percent of the country's food source it could become more. It would help improve the quality of food because it will help the crops grow bigger and provide better nutrients that we need. Not only that but it will help the farmers start to make a profit, and help the environment by not having everything as a desert or dry land. It will renew the marshlands and have animals return that were forced out because of drying lands (Fact Sheet. Web). With the drying lands and the increasing temperatures, it is hard to reverse what has already been done. It may affect the people that are living in Iraq more because, they are not able to get the correct land to plant their crops. They also will not be able to get the correct amount of water that should be drank during the day. It may worsen the day to day living and have to have people make cut backs on what they intake (Situation. Web).

5. How to Help

There is many different ways to help the water crisis happening in Iraq. One of the many, but simple ways to help the people of Iraq is to have organizations such as the Peace Corps go in or have the people come over to America. They will educate Iraq's how to conserve the water and show how to tap springs or dig wells. They will be involved in process by teaching what the Iraqians how to handle the safe water. With the help of these organizations they are able to help construct portable water storage and distribution facilities (Peace Corps.Web).

There is also the Good Water Neighbors project which does not focus on Iraq. It focuses on countries near it. With help it is possible to bring in this project to the area and restore peace and fix the water solution. The idea of this project is to inform communities from different countries of their water problems and have them communicate back and forth. They will cooperate to build new or make their water sectors better. It will be put into schools, churches, and community buildings where everyone is able to easily access the water. They will make a team of youth that will be working alongside the adults as the local communicator to run the program. The youth will be the ones who will be making decisions and working to get everything in place. Different organizations will be informed on all the different water related issues and help make decisions. Someone from America will stay there the first year or two to make sure that everything is running smoothly. In the countries that they have already done this in it has had great feedback. They were able to make new work for people that did not have work. They were also able to make it very publicized. It has also help the countries connect and let many more people have the water that they need (Eco Peace. Web).

Both of these projects would be successful, because they are both very easy to do and do not require a lot of training. Having people come in and educate them would only require them to listen and to learn about the different ways that they could take action. It would also have them take part and help with the manual labor that the Peace Corps are trying to educate them on. It would take less than a year to do (Peace Corps. Web). The Good Water Neighbors project would be in effect in less than a year and would have people working with them for four years (Eco Peace. Web).

6. Support

There would also be the possibility to have the U.S Department of State help with information and building of irrigation systems. This will help the agriculture, because it will mean that the plants are being watered and are making more food for the people of the country. This is a new technology to them, but it

would be a simple enough technology for them to run and that could be sustained for long periods of time. I believe that they would be able also to help support this project, because it ties in with the irrigation systems and I also believe they will support this decision, because after fighting a war with them they want to make peace and help out the innocent. The Department of State would be able to help raise awareness of the countries struggling with water needs and they would be able to help pair up Iraq with a good country that they would work well with. The USDS would also be able to go over to the Middle East and be able to help inform them of all the information they need to know to help build the resources that they need or they could send people here to work with trained members of this project. Another simpler idea would be to have them dig wells that are deeper than the ones that are there now. Sometimes the wells are not dug as far as they should and not able to reach as much water (Lueck. Web).

7. Conclusion

While some people may thirst for fame or knowledge, there is people out there who thirst for water, to have crops grow or for a drink of water. Sometimes everyone will forget to think about other people who are not quite as fortunate as others. It is hard to want to do good for others when everyone wants to concentrate on ourselves. In Iraq people are struggling with many problems including not having enough water but also retaining money to support their families. If some take the time to be able to learn about the country and all their struggles that they have. As Americans have more wealth they are able to go into Iraq and help the people that are struggling day to day to get some water. It may not happen overnight, but it will slowly happen. Sometimes they are able to help others and maybe not be completely achieve our pursuits, but are able to help others achieve theirs.

Works Cited

ANDREAS LUECK. "Advanced Hydrogeological Survey for Sustainable Groundwater Development in Iraq (Phase I) | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization." *Advanced Hydrogeological Survey for Sustainable Groundwater Development in Iraq (Phase I) | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*. UNESCO, n.d. Web. 09 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/iraq-office/natural-sciences/hydrogeological-survey/>>.

Chulov, Martin, and Katy Stoddard. "Water Shortage Threatens Two Million People in Southern Iraq." *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, 27 Aug. 2009. Web. 09 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/aug/26/water-shortage-threat-iraq>>.

"Climate Situation in Iraq." *Global Citizen Corps*. Mercy Corps, 08 Oct. 2008. Web. 06 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.globalcitizencorps.org/groups/issue-climate-change/17120>>.

Eco Peace. "Introduction." *Good Neighbor Project*. Studio Karmel, n.d. Web. 09 Mar. 2014. <<http://foeme.org/www/?module=projects>>.

Davis, Eric. "Iraq's Water Crisis Threatens Its Economic and Political Development." *The Middle East*. Blogger, 2012. Web. 09 Mar. 2014. <<http://new-middle-east.blogspot.com/2010/12/iraqs-water-crisis-threatens-its.html>>.

"Food from Iraq: Dining Etiquette, Culinary Influences, Staple Foods, Specialties, & Drinks." *Food from Iraq: Dining Etiquette, Culinary Influences, Staple Foods, Specialties, & Drinks*. Safari The Globe, Mar. 2003. Web. 13 Mar. 2014. <http://www.safaritheglobe.com/food_iraq.aspx>.

Helen Chapin Metz. "Iraq - FAMILY AND SOCIETY." *Iraq - FAMILY AND SOCIETY*. US Library of Congress, 1998. Web. 13 Mar. 2014. <<http://countrystudies.us/iraq/44.htm>>.

JUSTIN RAGLAND. *Literacy and Non-Formal Education in Iraq | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Literacy and Non-Formal Education in Iraq | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*. UNESCO, n.d. Web. 13 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/iraq-office/education/literacy-non-formal-education/>>.

Maden, Tugba E. "The Water Issue in Iraq and Attempts to Solve It." *TODAY'S ZAMAN*. ORSAM, 2007. Web. 13 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.todayszaman.com/news-311203-the-water-issue-in-iraq-and-attempts-to-solve-it.html>>.

"Peace Corps." *Peace Corps*. Open Gov, 2014. Web. 06 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.peacecorps.gov/>>.

"Salary Survey in Iraq." / *Salary Comparison*. Salary Explorers, 2012. Web. 13 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.salaryexplorer.com/salary-survey.php?loc=103&loctype=1>>.

The Environmentalists Against War. "Iraq's Water War." *Environmentalists Against War*. N.p., 31 May 2012. Web. 09 Mar. 2014. <<http://www.envirosagainstar.org/know/read.php?itemid=12248>>.

"The Water Issue in Iraq and Attempts to Solve It." *TODAY'S ZAMAN*. Feza Gazetecilik, 2007. Web. 09 Mar. 2014.

<<http://www.todayszaman.com/news-311203-the-water-issue-in-iraq-and-attempts-to-solve-it.html>>.

"Water in Iraq Factsheet." *UN Iraq*. Joint Analysis and Policy Unit, Mar. 2013. Web. 09 Mar. 2014. <<http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Water-Factsheet.pdf>>.

Wiki. "Tradition and Culture." *Refugee*. Tangient LLC, 2014. Web. 06 Mar. 2014. <<https://refugee.wikispaces.com/Iraq-Tradition+and+Culture>>.