

# Life Without Taps

Across the world one in ten people live without access to clean water. This affects their lives in many ways including their ability to prosper, access to education, health, and their ability to have time for recreation.

In Cambodia clean water is not something that people can take for granted. Around 30% of the population struggle to have access to clean water.

Here in New Zealand, even the water used to flush most of our toilets has been treated to the same standard as our drinking water. Our houses have an ever increasing number of taps, showers and toilets.



*Life Without Taps* is a game to help young people engage with the problem of living without easy access to clean water and to identify with the people who have to cope with this.

## Summary of the Game

Participants form 'family' groups and imagine that they are farmers in Cambodia in a village where their pump has broken down. Each group has to work together to 'collect' water from a 'river' three kilometres away. They need enough to meet their family's needs, for things such as drinking water and to water crops for food.

During the game, the leader gives 'chance cards' to particular groups, who then have to deal with changes to their situation that will affect their ability to collect enough water. Each family fills in a family sheet to show how many of their needs they have been able to fulfill through collecting water. The first family to collect the minimum daily amount of water is the winner.



## The Players

This game is suitable for groups of up to 30 players, provided there is adequate room to move about.

**1 DAY OF  
DIFFERENCE  
FOR A LIFETIME  
OF CHANGE**

## **The Leader and the Store Keeper**

This game requires responsible leaders. One will lead the game, ie. check no-one is cheating, encourage 'families' to work well together, and give out more scrap paper. This Leader will decide when to give out 'chance cards' and discuss their implications with the group. S/he draws the game to a close and leads a reflection time.

The other leader acts as the Storekeeper and checks that families have correctly 'filled' their buckets. S/he gives out Item Cards as families gain them through collecting water and keeps a tally of crops growing for each family. It may be useful to have two Leaders looking after the Storekeeper's table.

### **Equipment Needed:**

A large room or hall  
One long piece of blue/ brown cloth or a bench  
6 'families' of 4 or 5 people  
6 long tables with enough chairs  
6 buckets labelled Family A, B etc

*The following items are shared between the 6 Family buckets:*

6 x Family sheets  
24 x sheets of A4 scrap paper, clean on one side  
12 x blue and 12 brown crayons  
12 x pencils  
6 x bucket templates  
12 x pairs of scissors

*On another table set up as the 'Storekeeper's table', you will need:*

6 copies of the Item cards sheet. These need to be cut up and put into separate piles for each item  
1 Tally sheet to record each family's progress

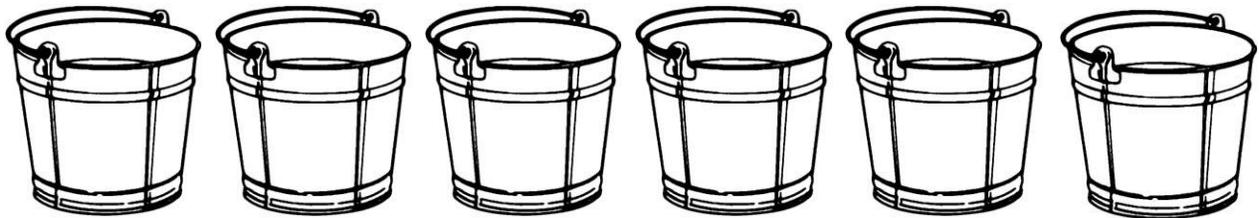
*The Leader of the game will need:*

Copies of the Chance cards  
Extra scrap paper, to distribute sparingly (approx. 26 pieces of A4)

# The Game

## Preparation

1. Make a copy of the Family sheet for each 'family'.
2. Make enough photocopies of the pictures of items needed depending on number of 'families' playing i.e. one of each item for every family. Cut out.
3. Photocopy the Tally sheet for the 'Storekeeper'.
4. Photocopy the Chance cards onto a piece of card and cut out.
5. Gather plenty of scrap paper, clean on one side. You will need approximately 50 sheets for 6 'families'.
6. Set up the room. Place 2 lines of 3 tables down the middle of the room with plenty of space for getting up and down. At one end of the room, set up the Storekeeper's table with the card items on it and the tally sheet. At the other end of the room, lay a long piece of blue/brown cloth e.g. old curtain or a bench to denote where the river is. Place buckets on or under the end of each Family's table with the equipment they need to collect water.



## Playing the game (30 mins)

Explain that since the village pump has broken down, each family must fetch water from a river about 3 km away.

Explain that the cards they are going to collect represent **seven basic tasks** for which each family requires water. Hold up a card of each item and ask pupils to guess which water need each card represents. (Check understanding of the term 'cash crops', meaning the crops to earn money for things the family cannot grow, as distinct from 'food crops' for crops for the farmers to eat themselves).

## What the families must do

To 'fetch' water, each family must cut out 'buckets' using the template and colour them in. They must take one completed 'bucket' of water at a time and place it in their real bucket. One person from each family must carry this on their heads via the 'river' to the Storekeeper, who will then give them an item in return. In the case of food or cash crops, which each need four 'buckets' of water, the Storekeeper will keep a **tally** of buckets for the family until they have collected enough.

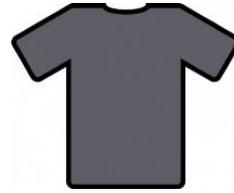
Each family keeps a record of what they have collected on their Family sheet.

## The seven basic tasks

Cup – water to drink



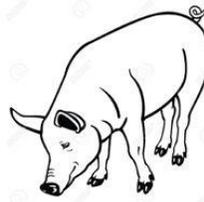
Soap – water to wash with



Cloth – water to wash clothes with

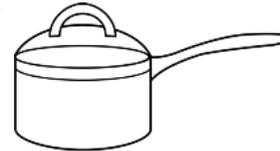
Cashew nut – water to grow cash crops

Pot – water to cook with



Rice – water to grow food crops

Pig – water to give to animals



## The Storekeeper's role

If a coloured in bucket is acceptable, the Storekeeper asks the family member who brought it which item they would like. S/he hands over the appropriate item card and ticks this off against that family on the Tally sheet. (NB: Crops need four buckets of water, so the Storekeeper must keep a tally of buckets brought for these on the Tally Sheet).

The Storekeeper is allowed to reject buckets. For example, the river water is likely to be full of sediment and therefore brown, so the Storekeeper could reject blue coloured buckets. The Storekeeper can be very strict about colouring in, especially at the start of play or if one family is very speedy.

## The Leader's role

The Leader explains the game and the rules and gives out a bucket, filled with all the equipment, to each family. The Leader must ensure that families are not cheating or running with the bucket, distribute extra scrap paper and give out the Chance cards about half way through the game. All the families must listen as each family reads out their Chance card.

NB: It is important that one family ends up with the card to say that they have a new **pump**, in order to show the difference that this can make. If you have fewer than 6 groups, take out any extra cards, but not the one about the pump.

## Rules of the game

- Buckets must be cut out one at a time
- Only one paper bucket can be taken to the Storekeeper at a time
- No running with the buckets
- No short cuts – everyone goes via the river to the Storekeeper
- Only one person can leave their Family table at a time

## How to win the game

Families may collect items in any order. They only need **one** of each of the seven items to represent that their minimum daily water requirements have been met. The game can finish when the first family has everything on the list. If most of the others are lagging far behind, the winning group can continue to earn an **extra** cashew nut cash crop until one or two other families also have what they need.

## Post-game discussion (15 mins)

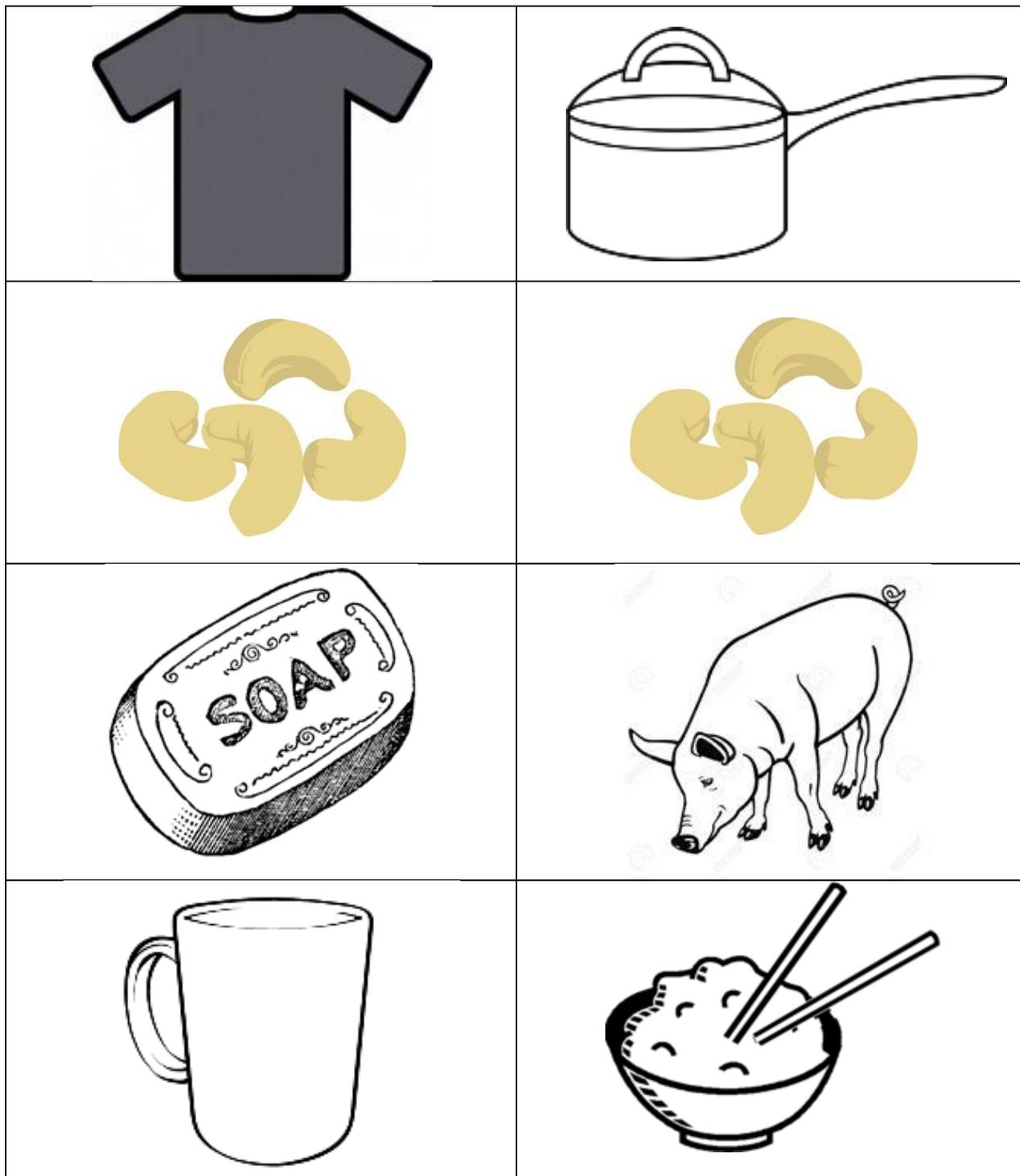
Ask the whole group how they felt as they were playing the game. What made things hard for them? What made things better? What difference would it have made if you knew you really needed the water?

## Some questions and points to draw out:

- This game only represented fetching water for one day's needs. How would you feel if you had to do this every day?
- Even by working very hard, some of groups still did not end up with enough water for all their needs. People in this situation may work hard to survive, but still may not have the basics.
- Under these conditions, co-operation is very important if a family is to survive.
- In this game, all members of the families were working to get water. Who would do this job in reality? What effect does this have on their lives? (Effects on children may include interrupted education and poor health).
- Pupils were only carrying empty buckets. Real buckets and containers could weigh 12kg or more (1 litre of water = 1kg). Ask which parts of their body would hurt if they did this every day.
- One of the Chance cards mentions the river drying up. Many areas of the world are suffering the effects of water shortages due to droughts.
- Why is drought an increasing problem? Is there any connection with our lifestyle in more economically developed countries? (e.g. carbon emissions affecting the climate globally, tourism in less economically developed countries using large amounts of water).
- Some cash crops need a lot of water – e.g. cashew nuts. What effect might using a lot of water in this way have on the local people?

Life Without Taps – Game Sheet 1: Item cards

Make one copy per family and cut out.



Life Without Taps – Game Sheet 2: Bucket templates  
*One bucket template needed per 'family'. Copy onto card.*



<p>Your village now has a pump nearby so you can get your water much more quickly.</p> <p><b>Each bucket you produce is worth 2 buckets.</b></p>	<p>One of your young relatives got sick and has died. All your family must go to the funeral.</p> <p><b>Everyone stops work for 5 minutes.</b></p>
<p>You have hurt your back from carrying so much water. It is so hard to carry water now.</p> <p><b>You must do all work with the opposite hand to normal (left hand if you are right handed) for 5 minutes.</b></p>	<p>There has been no rain this year. The river you collect water from is dry.</p> <p><b>One person must stop work to go and look for more water.</b></p>
<p>The water in the river is dirty.</p> <p><b>3 people in your family are ill from drinking dirty water. They must stop working for 5 minutes.</b></p>	<p>The track home is very rough. You have fallen and spilled the water in your bucket.</p> <p><b>You must tear up any half finished buckets.</b></p>

Life Without Taps – Game Sheet 4: Family sheet  
Make one copy per family

You live in an area where there is not much water. You collect your water from a river. You must collect enough water for your family and grow crops to sell to buy things you cannot grow.

Work hard with your family to collect enough water for all your family's needs for one day. The first family to get everything they need is the winner.

Water you need to collect	Number of buckets per day for this	Item to collect	Tick when you have this
To drink	1	Cup	
For cooking	1	Pot	
For washing hands etc	1	Soap	
For washing clothes	1	Shirt	
For animals	1	Pig	
For growing food crops	4	Rice	
For growing cash crops	4	Cashew Nuts	



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Life Without Taps – Game Sheet 5: Tally sheet  
*One copy only needed*

Tick off the items as the families bring ‘buckets’. For items needing more than one bucket of water, keep a tally. StoreKeeper to tally and tick when the family has the item.

Family	Drinking water 1 bucket	Cooking water 1 bucket	For washing hands and dishes 1 bucket	For washing clothes 1 bucket	For animals 1 bucket	For food crops 4 buckets	For cash crops 4 buckets
A							
B							
C							
D							
E							
F							



## Where's the best place to get water?

In the game, the 'families' collect water from a river. Water in such a rural area might be collected from a number of sources, each with advantages and disadvantages. You may wish to discuss this with the group before play starts. See the table below.

Source of Water	Advantages	Disadvantages
River	Free  Fast flowing – water can be aerated	Water likely to be polluted by animal faeces and could carry diseases such as cholera.  Danger of drowning especially in rainy season.
Pump water	Is from deep underground and less likely to be polluted.  Water less likely to run dry.	Can be very expensive digging a borehole for the pump.  Several boreholes may need to be dug before a good supply is found.  Can be hard work to pump the water up.  If pump breaks down someone needs to know how to mend it.  Parts must be fetched and paid for.
Well	If the well is deep enough water likely to be less polluted than river and lake.	Can be dangerous digging the well especially without safety equipment.  If the well is not covered up there is danger of contamination.
Waterhole (this is usually a dry riverbed)	Free	Erratic supply.  May have to wait a long time for the hole to fill up after water is drawn.
Rainwater Harvesting ie. Collecting rainwater from roofs and roads etc.	Rainwater should be relatively clean.  Much cheaper than the cost of digging a borehole for a pump.  Rainwater can be harvested using recycled materials, eg. old containers attached to pipes from roofs, roads, etc.	Rainfall is increasingly erratic in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa.  Tiled or zinc roofs are needed along with guttering and a storage system.

*This game has been adapted from CAFOD, UK and BridgesGlobal.org.uk.*

