

Water and Sanitation in the News

This is a strange one: Water, water everywhere but not a drop to drink in Africa

It is totally counter-intuitive, but if you want to live in a country where you are nearly certain that you will have water flowing in your taps throughout the year, live in a dry desert country in Africa. The drier a country is, the more (not less) likely its people have a steady supply of water in their homes, shows the latest data comparisons from [Afrobarometer](#) and the World Bank, as the world marks World Water Day today. Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and South Africa, all of which record less than 500mm of rainfall a year, have less than one in four saying they go without water "always" or "several times".

Conversely, some of the wettest countries in Africa, such as Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, Guinea and Madagascar have more than 50% of survey respondents saying they are forced to make do without sufficient water, even if these countries have an annual precipitation rate in the region of 1,500mm a year.

The likely reason is that if you're living in a dry country, water is a high priority for everyone, so governments will invest in dams, reservoirs and piped water systems as a matter of necessity. It also helps that the arid countries in Africa tend to be wealthy, thanks to



oil, gas and mineral deposits, and governments supply water as a way of spreading around natural resource revenues and keeping people happy.

But on the other hand, countries with abundant rainfall never have to face the fear of running out of water, and so creating water conservation systems and piping water into people's homes is not so much of a priority. Something akin to an "abundance curse" sets in... For the majority of Africans, water has to be fetched outside the home, with 54% saying their primary source of water is outside their home compound. One in four gets their water from the

comfort of a tap inside the home, but this average figure masks great disparity. In Uganda, Malawi, Burkina Faso, Burundi and Tanzania, just 2% say their primary source of water is inside the house, while in Mauritius, Egypt and Algeria, it's over 93%. Generally, rural residents are more likely to go without water than their urban counterparts, the survey data shows. The greatest rural-urban gaps are in Swaziland (32 percentage points), Botswana (32 points), South Africa (30 points) and Burkina Faso (29 points).

These countries are dry, so eking out a rural existence on the land is difficult, and people band together in towns where services are more accessible – hence the big gaps in service provision...

Source: [Mail & Guardian Africa, 22 March 2015](#)

Context

In surveyed countries, half of the population goes without enough clean water for home use, while 44% of surveyed communities lack access to a piped water supply and 72% lack access to sewerage - and access rates are even worse in rural areas. Across much of Africa, citizens rate their governments' performance on water and sanitation issues as "fairly" or "very" poor.

In observance of [World Water Day](#) (March 22), Afrobarometer data amplifies the voices of ordinary Africans who call on their governments to address inadequate water supply and sanitation as a top priority.

Source: [Business Ghana, 23 March 2015](#)

Ensuring that quality of life for all is continually improving can only be achieved if we have the knowledge, know-how and expertise to manage and operate our built and social environment in such a way that our natural resources do not fail in future to provide the resources which life depends on. WATER is the most vital resource for people and all other living creatures and organisms.

The **Municipal Assistant™** System was developed to address the need, with its main objective being to provide local municipalities with the necessary tools to ensure the sustainable use and management of their water resources.

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