

WATER AROUND THE WORLD

# Paola's Story

How water wells can change the world.





In the morning, Paola hears the roosters crowing. Her four younger brothers and sisters are still sleeping. It is only 5 am. Paola climbs out of her hammock, puts on her favourite yellow dress, and steps outside into the sunlight.

Paola's mother is already getting ready for the day. She tosses tiny bits of maiz, or corn, to the hen and her chicks. She smiles at Paola.

“You better hurry *hija*, daughter.”

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**CORN** - Corn is very common in Nicaragua.

Paola's family grows corn, rice, and beans.

Paola's mother grinds the corn kernels into flour, and makes corn tortillas - which are similar to flat, grilled pancakes.





NORTH  
AMERICA



CANADA

Paola lives with her family in the village of Santa Teresa, Nicaragua.

Nicaragua is a small country located in Central America – a region that is just below the United States and Mexico.

Nicaragua is a beautiful country. There are beaches and volcanoes and mountains and many lakes and rivers.

In Santa Teresa, where Paola lives with her family, the weather is very, very hot and dry. Lately there hasn't been rain during the rainy season, and the streams and rivers are very low. This has Paola's parents very worried. They say the weather is changing because of *climate change*.



USA

MEXICO

CENTRAL  
AMERICA



NICARAGUA



Paola is the oldest child of her family. For as long as she can remember, Paola has helped her mother to cook and clean, take care of her brothers and sisters, and most important, to collect water. Paola and her family need water for drinking, cooking, cleaning and watering plants in their garden.



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**HOUSE WALL** - Paola's home is made of clay bricks called *adobe*. The stove is also made of clay, rocks, and mud. Paola's mother must first collect wood and light a fire before cooking. There are small holes in the wall so that when she cooks, the smoke escapes from the house.



Paola knows that collecting the water is a very important job. She remembers learning from her mother how to balance the water pail on top of her head. Now Paola is ten years old and goes to collect water all by herself. She is strong enough to carry home a large water pail without spilling a drop.





Paola skips along the path leading to the water well in the village. The water well was built in Santa Teresa one year ago. She is happy that it is close to her home. Before, Paola and her mother had to go very far into the mountains to collect water at a small stream. It was a lot of work to carry the water home. They also had to boil it before drinking because sometimes the water was dirty and full of bugs and diseases that would make her very sick. When she and her brothers and sisters were ill, they could not leave home to go to school. Paola is glad because now the water from the well is safe to drink.






**TREES** - Did you know that trees are important for conserving water? Tree roots hold water in the ground. Where you find forests, you will find water! In Nicaragua today, many trees are being cut down for firewood and farmland - this is called deforestation.

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On the path, she passes two friends who have already filled their own water pails.

“See you at school later!” she waves to her friends.

Paola is in grade four. Now that the water well is closer to home, she has enough time to finish her chores in the morning and go to school in the afternoon. Her favourite subject is science. In class, Paola learns about the importance of water for all living things. People, plants and animals all need clean water to grow and survive.



At the well, Paola waits her turn to fill up the green water pail. A boy helps her crank the handle up and down. It squeaks and water rushes out of the tap into her hands. She takes a long drink of the cold water.



Careful not to spill a single drop, she lifts the water pail on top of her head and slowly walks back down the path.

On the walk home, Paola thinks about how much she loves her family. She is very proud because her parents help organize village meetings about water and health. They talk with other parents about problems in Santa Teresa and how they can work together to find solutions. Paola's parents teach her that water is very special and must be used carefully. Everyone has a say in how water is used in the community.



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**ECO STOVE** - Paola's mother just received an eco-stove. Eco-stoves help to reduce deforestation because it requires 75% less firewood. The eco-stove also helps to reduce the amount of smoke that fills Paola's home when her mother is cooking.



*“Gracias, thank-you daughter,”* says Paola’s mother when she arrives home with the full water pail. Paola smiles happily. Her mother adds a cup of water to the big pot on the stove. She is preparing atole, a drink made of milk, corn, and cinnamon. It is Paola’s favourite drink.

*“It’s going to be a great day!”* Paola exclaims.





She is excited to go to school in the afternoon.

When she grows up, Paola wants to be an engineer. She wants to help build water wells in other villages in Nicaragua. Paola knows that all children need clean drinking water to stay healthy and be able to go to school everyday. Paola knows that water is a human right.



# QUESTIONS ABOUT PAOLA'S STORY

**1**

**In the story, Paola goes to collect water from the well.**

**What does Paola and her family need the water for? How do they use water?**

**2**

**What are some of the ways you, and your family, use water everyday?**

**How are these uses similar to Paola's water needs? How are they different?**

**3**

**Where did Paola collect water before the well was built in her community?**

**What were some of the hardships she and her family faced? How is life better now that they have a well?**



# QUESTIONS ABOUT PAOLA'S STORY

**4**

**Why were the streams and rivers so low in Paola's village?**

**What do you think "climate change" means? (Tip - think about the weather)**

**5**

**Why is Paola proud of her parents? What are they doing to help take care of water in Santa Teresa?**

**6**

**What does Paola want to be when she grows up, and why?**

**7**

**Water is a human right. What does this mean to you?**





## WORLD WATER FACTS

**5**

The number of litres needed a day for basic human survival (for drinking and cooking)

**50**

The number of litres needed a day for cleaning, bathing and sanitation  
(flushing the toilet)

**343**

The number of litres that an average Canadian uses everyday! That's about 3 bathtubs filled with water!

**4**

The number of litres that an average Nicaraguan uses everyday. That's about a puddle of water at the bottom of the bathtub!





## WORLD WATER FACTS

**1500**

The number of litres that is required to produce 1 hamburger! That's about 12 bathtubs filled with water!

- Water is used to grow food for the cows.
- Water is used to grow wheat for the buns, and for the lettuce & tomatoes!
- Water is used to make gasoline, which is needed for trucks to transport the food to the restaurant...and to put it on your plate!

That's a lot of water for 1 hamburger! Think about how water is used for the different foods you eat and the clothes you wear. Everything is made up of water! Water is life!





**2 BILLION**

The number of people in the world that don't have access  
to clean drinking water.

**80**

The percentage of disease and illness in the world that is  
caused by drinking dirty and polluted water.



# How can kids and schools make a difference?

Let's brainstorm ways to water SHARE, become water AWARE, and take CARE of water!

## 1. Water SHARE

WHAT CAN WE DO TO SHARE WITH GIRLS AND BOYS WHO DO NOT HAVE  
ACCESS TO CLEAN DRINKING WATER?

> Fundraise to help raise money for a community well in Nicaragua! Brainstorm with your teacher and classmates. What can you do? Plan a bake sale, or a coin drive event to collect loose change. Hold a Spell-a-Thon event and collect pledges from family and friends.

*\* Remember that every little bit counts towards helping girls and boys have clean water to drink.*

*Together, we can make a big difference!*



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## 2. Water **AWARE**

WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP OUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY BECOME MORE  
AWARE ABOUT WATER AROUND THE WORLD?

- > Plan a 'World Water Day' event at our school to share 'world water facts!'
- > Organize a 'Water Walk' with our classmates - fill empty milk-containers with water, and walk around the school or playground ...to know what it would be like to have to carry water everyday!



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## 3. Water CARE

WHAT CAN WE DO TO TAKE CARE OF WATER IN OUR HOMES, AND AT SCHOOL?

- > Use less! Turn off the tap when you are brushing your teeth, or putting soap on your hands.
- > Flush less! 30% of our daily water use is from flushing the toilet. Ask your parents or teachers to put a brick, or plastic bottle filled with water, in the back of the toilet. It's a simple trick to help save water!
- > Don't buy bottled water. It takes water just to make plastic bottles! Instead, carry your own water bottle that you can fill up from the tap.
- > Don't let the rain wash away! Ask your parents to put a 'Rain Barrel' outside that catches water you can use for watering the garden or lawn.





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