

A world without clean water



Hollywood actor, Matt Damon is world famous for his box-office hits such as the *Bourne* films but he is also a well-known humanitarian. Back in 2009, he co-founded *Water.org*, a non-profit organisation that provides the developing world with access to safe water and sanitation. Its aim still remains the same: to assist the 2.6 billion people worldwide that lack clean sanitation and the 1 in 9 people who lack access to safe water, many of whom live in rural

areas. To put it into perspective, that's the same as two and a half times the population of the USA.

As Matt explains, 'Over 4,000 children in the developing world die from water-related diseases every day. After visiting project sites in Africa and Asia, I've seen the problem and the impact



of safe water and in this day and age it's totally unnecessary that people die from a lack of clean water.'

Twenty-one-year-old Moina is one of the many thousands of people that *Water.org* has been helping over the years. Working as a housemaid, she lives in

Board Guard slum in Dhaka, Bangladesh, with her husband and eight-month-old daughter, along with four million other people. Her husband is a rickshaw puller. As the slum has no access to safe water, Moina has to get her family's drinking water from a public source about a mile away. They have to pay \$1.45 a month to use it. It's not unusual for the water to run out before everyone in the queue has



been able to fill their pots. She collects water twice a day and each trip takes her from one to two hours.

Moina uses a nearby pond for all other daily water needs, like bathing and washing clothes. The pond is contaminated by human and animal waste, as well as pollution. There are no sanitary toilets in Board Guard, only ‘hanging latrines’, which are basically sheets of cloth hung on bamboo poles for privacy.

Moina and her family have suffered from water-related illnesses, such as diarrhoea and jaundice, as well as various skin diseases. She is a young woman with tremendous energy and spirit, and is now working with other Board Guard residents who have formed a community-based organisation and applied for a small loan through *Water.org* to build a well and latrine. Moina’s dream is to have access to clean water right by her home.