

Water is the most crucial natural resource for proliferation of life and human development. Water is very important to us, so the lack of safe, clean water is something to be discussed. Water grows crops, produces electricity, and is used to cook and clean. Contrary to popular belief that water is in abundance for the human use, the UNESCO World Development Report states that across the globe, 2.1 billion people lack access to safely-managed drinking water. This, along with water pollution, floods and droughts are just some of the many water related challenges. Moreover, in spite of this dismal thought, I emphatically believe that we can reduce these challenges with solutions that we can find in nature.

We must first understand what exactly Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) are. The International Union for Conservation of Nature best defines nature-based solutions as "Actions to protect, sustainably manage and restore natural or modified ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits." Hence, planting trees to replenish forests, grasslands and wetlands, reconnecting rivers to floodplains, creating buffers of vegetation along water courses are all examples of NBS that are substantial and cost-efficient that helps manage water availability and quality.

Additionally, nature-based solutions also play a unique and fundamental role in regulating the water cycle, keeping fresh water clean and improving the water security of our water cycles. With global population rapidly growing, the demand for water is only expected to increase. This would be okay if freshwater ecosystems were not degrading every hundred years or water pollution of rivers, lakes and dams was not so increasingly dangerous. Take for instance Asia; an economy that has shown rapid growth in the last number of years is now heavily negatively affected by water pollution. If this water is consumed, it can lead to sickness, diseases and even death. That is why it is so important to resolve water pollution problems.

Using nature-based solutions will result in the decrease of hunger and poverty and will increase the amount of healthy water being consumed resulting in good health. It may even provide and create jobs; improved health from better quality water will also mean higher productivity. Persons will not only "feel up" to doing work, but they will be healthy enough to perform. These solutions are also affordable and the use of clean energy will provide more sustainable water resources to serve growing settlements and cities. It will also encourage responsible consumption and production of water. Through the restoration of water in wetlands, they can reduce pollution by filtration and increase biodiversity by expanding natural habitats.

In conclusion, the use of nature-based solutions can and will mitigate many of the world's water challenges that we as human beings have created. It is therefore imperative that we look to nature to help us resolve these challenges because in the words of Audrey Hepburn, "Water is life and clean water means health."