



SAND DAMS TRANSFORMING LIVES IN DRYLANDS

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Sand Dams

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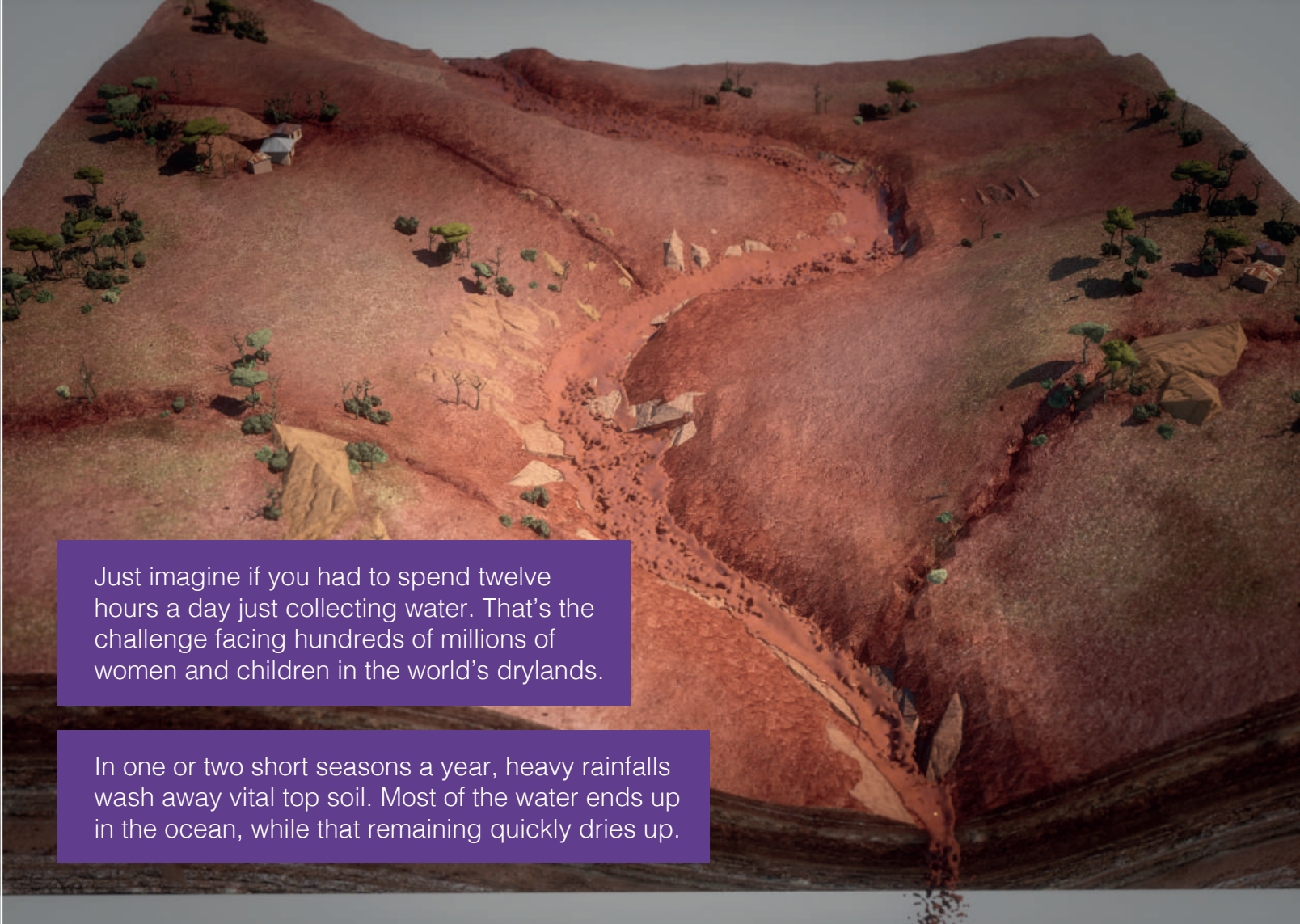
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Just imagine if you had to spend twelve hours a day just collecting water. That's the challenge facing hundreds of millions of women and children in the world's drylands.

In one or two short seasons a year, heavy rainfalls wash away vital top soil. Most of the water ends up in the ocean, while that remaining quickly dries up.



Just imagine if there was a solution to this water slavery.

It starts with a sand dam. Sand dams are reinforced concrete walls built across a seasonal riverbed. The cheapest form of rainwater harvesting in drylands.

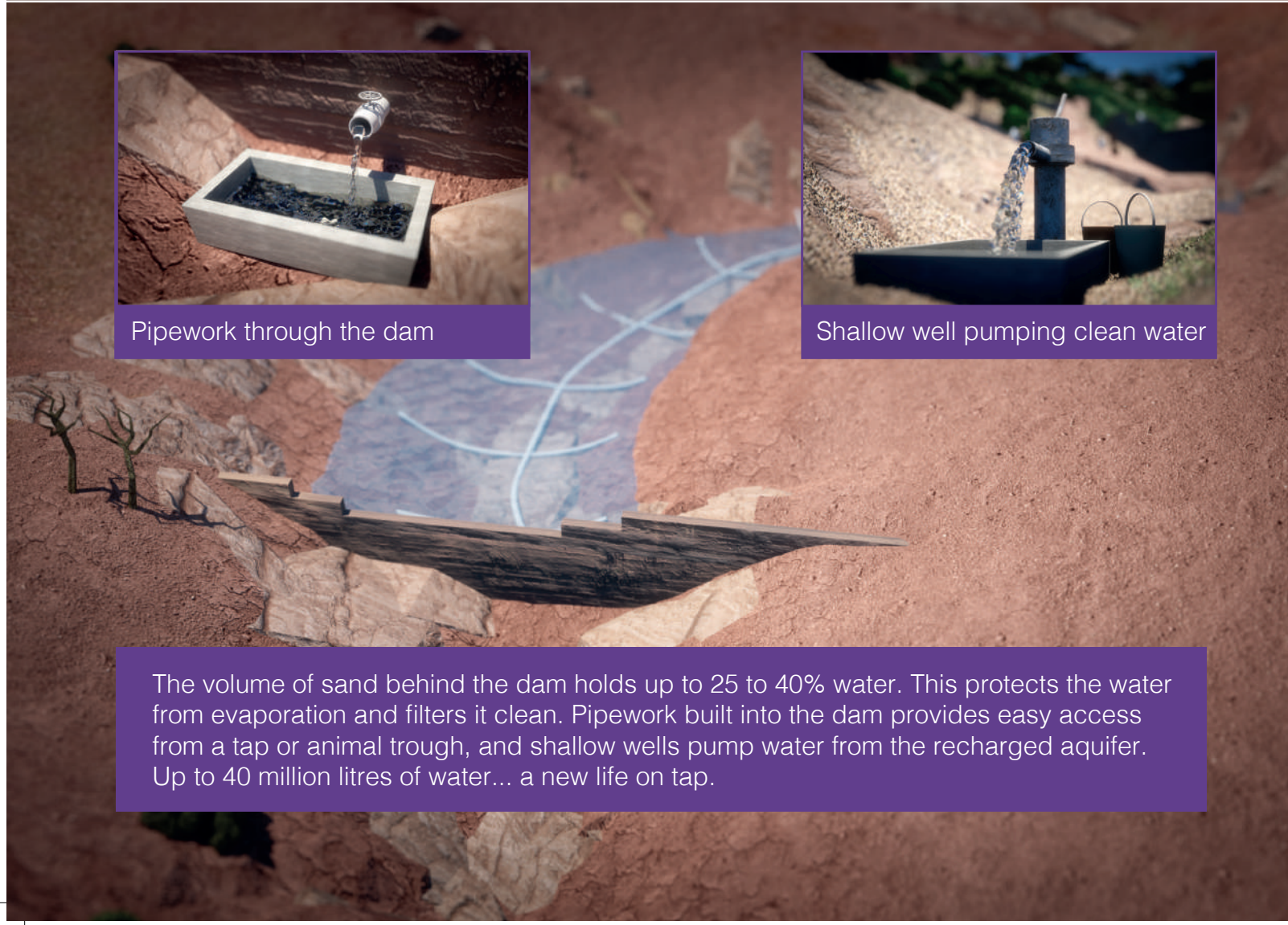


Seasonal rainstorms surge down the valley carrying water and soil. The sand in the water sinks, with most of the water and silt flowing over the top of the dam.

Within a day, or maybe two or three seasons, the dam fills with sand.



But that's just the beginning, what happens next transforms lives. With more time to farm and terrace the land, and water to grow trees, the environment flourishes giving the whole community hope and opportunity.



Pipework through the dam



Shallow well pumping clean water

The volume of sand behind the dam holds up to 25 to 40% water. This protects the water from evaporation and filters it clean. Pipework built into the dam provides easy access from a tap or animal trough, and shallow wells pump water from the recharged aquifer. Up to 40 million litres of water... a new life on tap.



Women and children complete their water chores in 30-90 minutes, children can now spend a full day in school. Women can invest time growing more food - both fruits and vegetables and a wider range of drought-tolerant crops - bringing better nutrition and extra income. Now that's communities transforming their own lives.