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Intermediate Student’s Book

Life

One village makes a difference

**Part 1**

**00.14–00.40** New Delhi is a large city in northern India. The heavy smog that usually fills the sky is so unclean that it’s difficult to see the city. The water supply doesn’t look much better. The Yamuna river is the city’s main source of drinking water. Fifty million gallons of industrial waste are thrown into the river every day. At times, this makes it look more like a science experiment than a proper water supply.

**00.42–01.19** The fourteen million people in and around New Delhi must get their water from community water tankers. These trucks deliver water to the towns where people live. Sometimes there’s enough water for everyone, and sometimes there isn’t. The people of New Delhi need about one billion gallons of water a day. They’re surviving on 25 per cent of that. Even in the richer areas, you’ll find busy shopping centres, well-dressed shoppers, expensive restaurants, and the same community water tankers.

**01.21–02.05** Outside of the city, in the desert of Rajasthan, getting water is even harder. The temperatures frequently reach 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Villagers walk for miles to get water. When they reach a well, they often have to drink next to their animals. An annual season of heavy rain, called ‘the monsoon season’, does provide relief. But it doesn’t replace the water that’s used every year. So the question remains: is there an answer to India’s water problem? Some leaders think that the answer lies in a series of new dams. However, many people disagree with this proposal. They believe that India’s existing dams have contributed to the water shortage by drying up riverbeds, fields and wells.

**02.07–02.22 Rajendra Singh** Thousands of millions of rupees have already been invested in water policy and big dams. How do you explain villages with no water? Who is responsible for all this? Well, the blame lies on the very system which advocates the construction of bigger dams.

Life

**Part 2**

**02.23–03.30** The answer to India’s water shortage may be found in a group of villages in the Alwar area of Rajasthan. Here, Rajendra Singh has started a non-governmental organisation that works with villagers to make clean water easily available. Singh encourages villagers to use an ancient method, one that uses small dams to store water and change the land. Under Singh’s direction, villagers decided to try the method. They began collecting stone and rock to make small earthen dams. They then made small pits, or holes, near them and laid a porous layer of stone, earth and clay. This stopped rainwater from running off and raised the level of the water under the ground. With every rain shower, the ground water level rose higher. Eventually, people were able to create wells to irrigate their farms. Soon, water reached every part of the village. Today, a village that was dry and lifeless is green and healthy. Because of two earthen dams, farmers who couldn’t grow enough food for their families can now produce food for them. And the idea has spread.

**03.31–03.39 Villager** We’re building water reservoirs and dams to save rainwater. We want our village, Rosda, to be green and prosperous like Neemie.

**03.40–03.48** At present, more than 4,000 earthen dams collect rainwater across western India. They provide water for more than 800 communities.

**03.50–end** The small-scale methods of Alwar aren’t practical for New Delhi. They wouldn’t be enough. Experts say that new water supplies and efforts to conserve water may slow the water shortage there – but only for about ten years. Perhaps the big cities can learn something from Alwar. Certainly, things here have changed for the better. People no longer walk a long way for water. A well is just down the road. It seems that in the region of Alwar, one village really can make a difference!