

SOMALI EMPOWERMENT CIRCLE

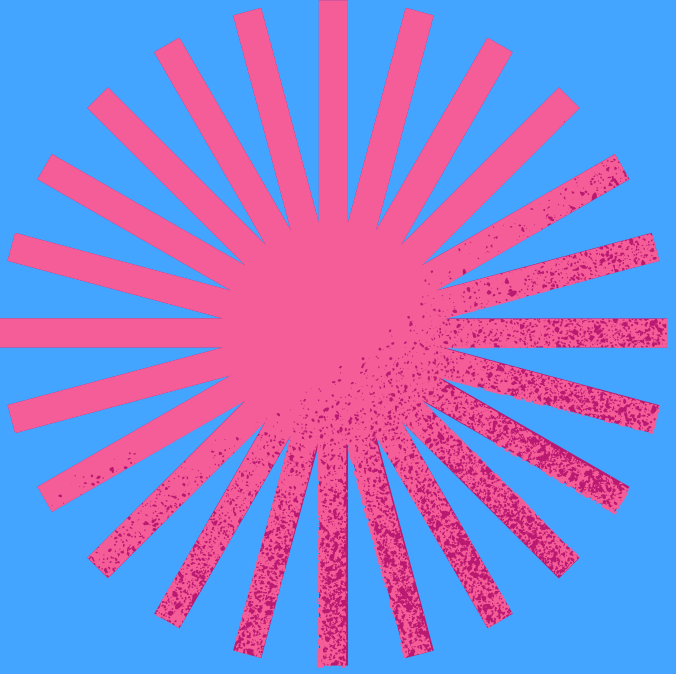
WATER 
CHANGES
EVERYTHING

Spoken Words: Importance of Water in our Culture and Faith

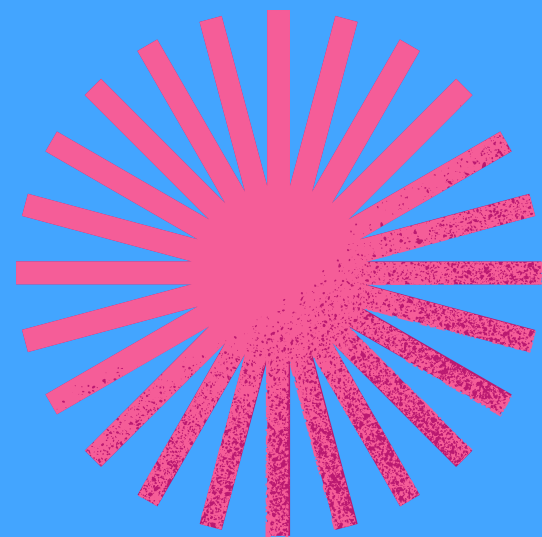




Water is a finite resource that we use to cleanse ourselves, to provide for ourselves and loved ones and to preserve our history through our identity as agro pastoralists.



My mother's memory of water was not always positive. She shares with me that water, in a form of flooding, often stole her home, pictures of her wedding and artifacts that once belonged to her grandparents. Traditional flood systems were not always practiced in her hometown in Somalia because of social and political trauma.





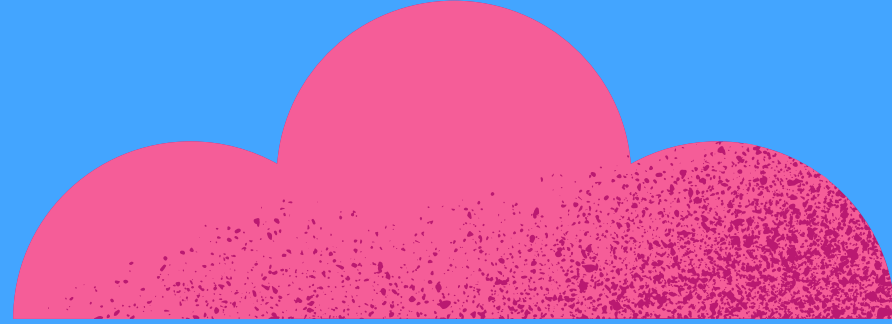
My father's memory of water stem from his family, who were farmers and had aqueduct on the river to help support them, especially during flooding season. The often withstood nature, but it wasn't until he moved to the city that his interaction with water changed.





Many of my community back home relied on groundwater from boreholes and wells. Some times, they would unite to purchase water trucks during difficult times, such as droughts or when wells would dry up.

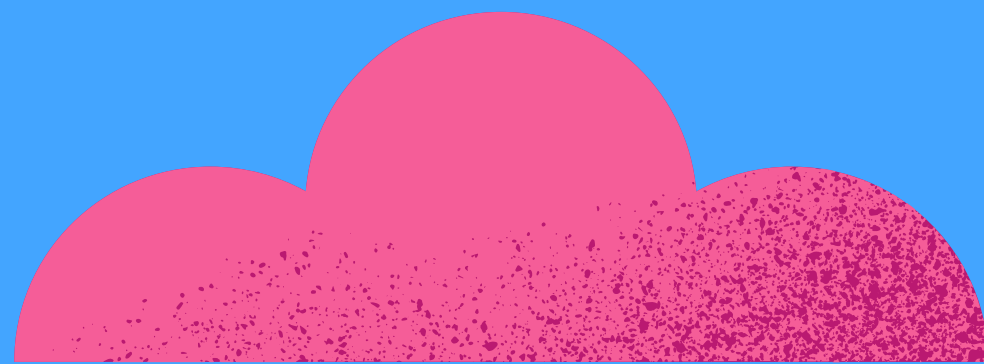


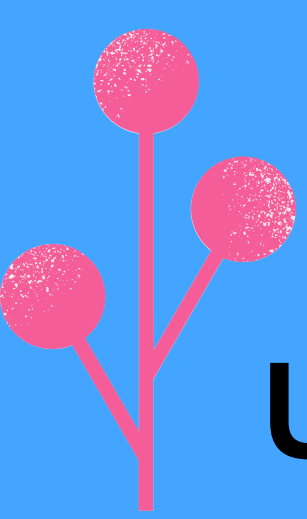


As refugees, we understood the value of water because our experiences with the resource was both positive and harsh.

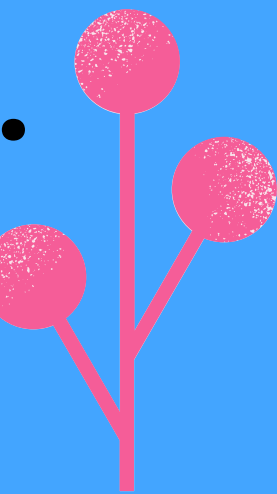
However, as we intergrate within a new country, our understanding of water changes. We suddenly forget what water means or how difficult it can be to access it.

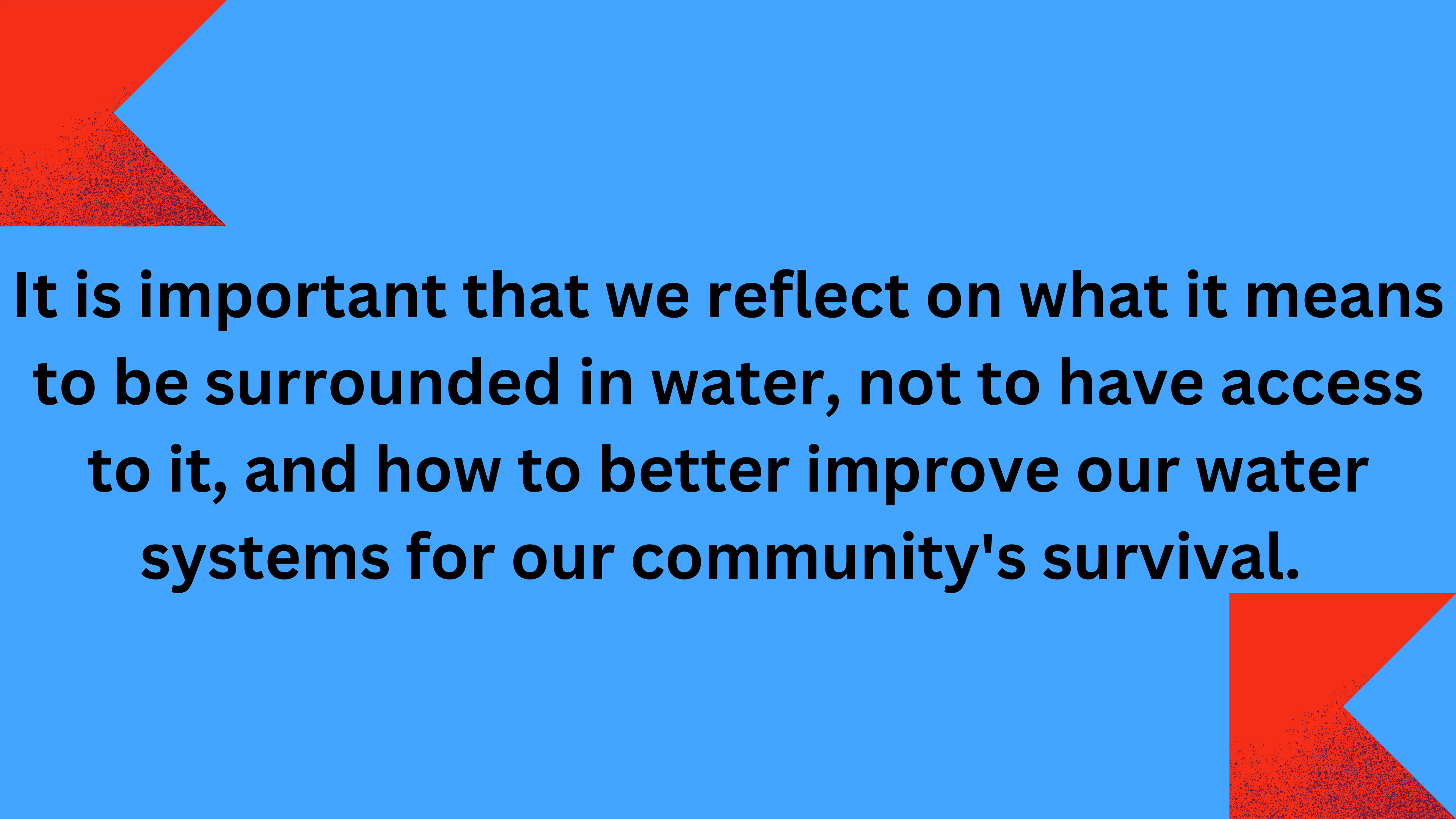
Somtimes, we also don't recognize that all water isn't good for us. Sometimes, we are traumatized by water that we rely on bottled water, which increases our plastic consumption.



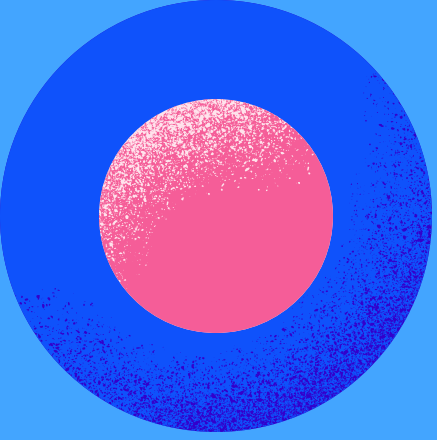


Using water is the first step to our act of worship as Muslims. We understand that we should not over-use it, just enough for the daily 5 prayers. It is in our act of worship that we come to understand how important water is. In our fasts during water, we abstain from food and water, but we do not have difficulties from the lack of food but the lack of water. It is in the moment that we remember how much our survival is based on water.



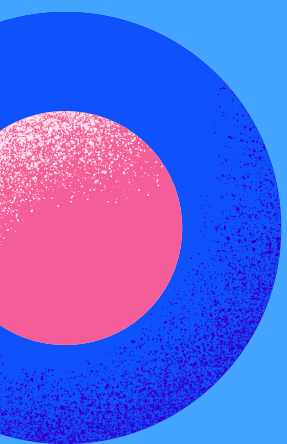


It is important that we reflect on what it means to be surrounded in water, not to have access to it, and how to better improve our water systems for our community's survival.



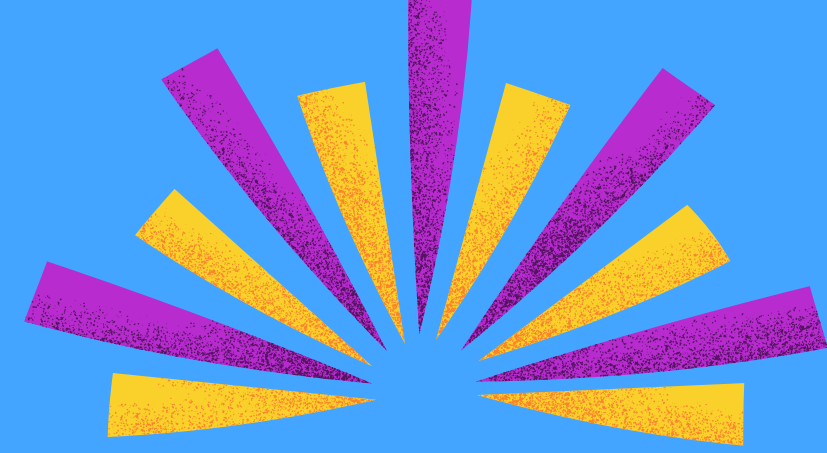
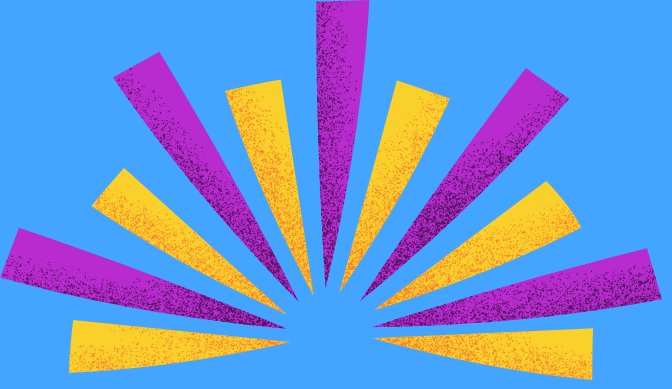
Rainwater harvesting is the process of collecting, storing, and utilizing rainwater that falls on rooftops, paved surfaces, or open areas. It is an ancient practice that has gained renewed interest in recent times due to water scarcity and environmental concerns.

Rainwater harvesting helps to conserve water resources, reduce the strain on municipal water supplies, and prevent runoff and erosion.



The feasibility of setting up a rainwater harvesting system largely depends on the following considerations:

- 1. Space Availability:** You'll need sufficient space to install rainwater harvesting tanks or barrels. Depending on the size of your property, you may choose to install above-ground tanks, underground cisterns, or smaller barrels connected in series.
- 2. Roof Area:** The amount of rainwater you can collect is directly related to the surface area of your roof. Larger roofs can collect more water, so consider the size of your roof when determining the potential water yield.
- 3. Local Regulations:** Check with your local authorities to ensure that rainwater harvesting is permitted in your area and whether there are any specific guidelines or restrictions you need to follow.
- 4. Rainfall Patterns:** The effectiveness of rainwater harvesting depends on the regularity and intensity of rainfall in your region. If you live in an area with frequent and adequate rainfall, rainwater harvesting will be more beneficial.
- 5. Usage Requirements:** Assess your water needs for various non-potable purposes such as gardening, irrigation, toilet flushing, or laundry. This will help you determine the storage capacity you require.
- 6. Budget:** While rainwater harvesting can save money in the long run, there will be upfront costs for purchasing tanks, filters, pipes, and other necessary equipment.



In our culture, we use rain water harvesting (during the rain season) to support our water needs. However, with the social-political barriers, this is not always accessible in certain cities/villages. Do you think this is something you would be interested in learning about and doing in Oregon?