Is it worth it?

For thousands of years, people got their water from rivers, streams and lakes and it cost them nothing. Then, as lifestyles changed, and people moved into towns and cities, water was no longer freely available. Towns were not always close to rivers, and people could not always depend on rain.

Yet many people believe that because our ancestors did not pay for water, neither should we. Zola is one of those people. He says that water is a human right and should be free. Busi disagrees with Zola. Her cousin died five years ago in a cholera outbreak in KwaZulu-Natal, caused by water that had been polluted by sewage. Busi’s father works for a water purification company, and understands that water needs to be cleaned before drinking it, and that people need to pay for this vital service.

It is important to remember that it is not the water itself that costs money. We pay for the technology, equipment and wages of the workers involved in supplying clean water which ensures a safe, clean water supply.

Activity – group work

Zola and Busi had this discussion.

**My parents can’t afford the rates for water. Anyway, why should we pay for it?**

**My father works for a water purification company and he would lose his job if nobody paid for water.**

**I’m sorry about that, Busi, but if the tanks and pipes have already been built, why do we still need people to work for water purification companies?**

Discuss

Who do you agree with – Zola or Busi? Talk about this and give reasons for your answer.

**LO1: HISTORICAL ENQUIRY**

The learner will be able to use enquiry skills to investigate the past and present.