

AS SIMPLE AS WATER

“Water”. I remembered melancholic its crystalline colour, the tiny waves formed when someone throws a stone and the superb feeling when it went through my throat. My name is Akinlana, but everyone calls me “Lana”. Ten years ago, I lived in a teeny village in Nigeria with my family which was formed by my father and my five siblings, two brothers and three sisters. We lived in a poor, wooden and 50 square meters cottage but my olive green eyes saw it as the best of the mansions. Together with my siblings, we shared out the housework, because my father worked in a coltan mine and my mother had recently died in the birth of the newborn twins. As I was the oldest brother, I was the one in charge of walking three kilometres to bring some water home. Every morning, at seven o’clock I woke up and I paced until I arrived there. The way to the pond was as adventurous as a film. I had to be very careful because it was usual to have an undesirable meeting with any wild animal. Truth be told, I was really scared whenever I heard weird noises. But the going was not as risky as the return. On the way back, while I carried more than three liters of filthy water, I had to be with a hundred of eyes, watching everything around me in case something unexpected, undesirable or unsafe appeared. When I arrived home I poured the water full of dirt in some bottles. The pale brown color of the water made it disgusting, but despite all this, we were very grateful we could have something to drink. When I had some spare time, I tried to read books about politics and economy in order to teach afterwards my little brothers and sisters, because we weren’t allowed to go to school either. The next day I woke up at the same time and I walked to the pond to have some yucky water for me and my family. And I repeated this every single day. When I finished reading a book about politics or economy, I truly felt I learned lots of things and I tried to explain my family what I had just read. On my 18th birthday, after coming back from the pond, my father told me he wanted to tell me something. We ambled around the house and he gave me a dirty envelope with my name written with the exceptional handwriting of my mother. I opened it meticulously, and inside I found a wad of notes. I glanced at my father with a silent tear sliding on my muddy skin and I denied. The devil in one of my shoulders, yelled at me saying I must accept the money but my heart and my whole body thought it was not the correct thing. Finally, my father set the bundle on my palm and with his vast and smooth hand, he closed my fist. He said, I had to pursue all my dreams. So that’s what I did. I moved away and went to live to London. I became part of a political party and with an incredible project carried out in only two years, we became the political party in charge of the country. Currently, I’m a member of the European Parliament and I’m trying to fight against the lack of drinkable water in some regions of our planet and in favour of a decent education for all children in the world.