

Water & Sanitation



The BluePump assures Sustainable Water Supply

The WatSan “Millennium Development Goals” will not be reached, there is no discussion about this anymore, but what are the reasons behind this, what are the failures and how can we do better? The answer to this question is not supposed to reach the general public, because it is as simple as painful and may create a shock wave:

“The NGO approach to solve water problems was not the solution, but became part of the problem”.

For more than 20 years NGO water projects have installed fragile handpumps with the assumption that “Community Management” would keep these pumps working. However, evaluations show that this VLOM handpump approach does not work in the end... Based on UNICEF estimations in 2010 over 150.000 handpumps in Africa are abandoned, which represents a capital loss of 2.500 million US\$.



150.000 handpumps abandoned; 2.5 billion US\$ wasted, how long can donors and the public accept this...?

VLOM handpumps have many breakdowns, because of that, people give up on them, not only due to missing spare parts. In Malawi, 40% (8.000) of the handpumps are not working, although spares are available. People go back to traditional sources or just wait for a new VLOM pump and the handpump cycle starts again.

FairWater Foundation

A Sustainable Business Approach is more effective & helps more people with the same amount of funding.

FairWater facilitates the local private sector to rehabilitate abandoned handpumps with the BluePump and technical back-up.

By Paul van Beers

New Business Opportunities

In rural Africa, where people have limited means and often survive on less than 1 US\$ a day, it is evident that it makes little sense to just give away handpumps that do not last and require frequent expensive repairs.

However, studies show that rural communities do value durable water supply, families are willing to pay 10 to 20 US\$ per year for a reliable service. A community of 25 to 50 families can easily bring up a yearly budget of 300 US\$ for maintenance. This is a business opportunity for the private sector. A contract in which communities only pay transport of the technician, but not for the repairs is profitable. For 40 pumps this will create a yearly turnover of 12.000 US\$, that is sustainable business.

The Sustainable Business Approach

First of all, it is crucial to have a very reliable handpump, that can be simply maintained at low-cost, to avoid too many costly repair trips. With the BluePumps, we involve the private sector in installation, service & maintenance and rehabilitation of more handpumps. FairWater facilitates this process in a cost-effective way. Because the existing infrastructure of its partners is used in stead of having own local offices, most of the funding is spend to create a local stock of BluePumps.

Users also prefer the BluePump, due to its easy to use, light pumping, high water output and last but not least, its reliability, also in boreholes with deeper water levels.

Facts & Figures

A handpump in an African rural community will serve on average about 50 families, or 250 persons per day. A new borehole + handpump costs about 20.000 US\$. This is an investment of 400 US\$ per family or 80 US\$ per person. If the handpump breaks down too often, statistics show that it will be abandoned within 5 years; all 20.000 US\$ is lost and the only lasting impact it has is the frustration of the users.

Water & Sanitation

With every 75.000 US\$ funding...

40 communities (2.000 families, 10.000 people) in Africa will have a durable BluePump with a back-up contract for 300 US\$ per year. Imagine, with every 1 million US\$ we serve 150.000 people with sustainable water.

Our program is bottom up oriented; that means that the communities apply themselves for rehabilitation. Before they had to wait and pray for a new donor to come by, now they can take matters in their own hands.

The following table compares the FairWater Approach with the durable BluePump to a traditional NGO water project with a borehole and fragile VLOM handpump.

	Traditional NGO Water Project	FairWater Approach
Funding	75.000 US\$	75.000 US\$
Water points	4	40
People served	1.000	10.000
Operational	<< 5 years	>> 15 years
Cost per person	75 US\$	7,5 US\$
Investment p. p. per year	15 US\$	0,5

This table shows that it is far more cost-effective to rehabilitate broken pumps and not make more new boreholes with handpumps that don't last long.



FairWater facilitates rehabilitation of abandoned water points, to avoid that all investment is lost forever.

Contact us and support us with a donation

If you want your donation to be really effective and help more people in Africa with sustainable water supply.

FairWater is transparent: Your funding and all our water projects can be followed on our website with the names of the sponsors.

FairWater is a Dutch Foundation that facilitates durable low cost solutions for Water Supply and Sanitation in Africa.

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BluePumps can be obtained worldwide through www.boode.com