

# WaterPartners International

*We envision the day when everyone in the world can take a safe drink of water.*

## The Ripple Effect: A Case for Support

### Who We Are

WaterPartners International is a U.S.-based non-profit that provides safe drinking water to people in developing countries. It began in 1990 with a fundraising event that was organized by Co-Founder and Executive Director Gary White to build a water system for a village in Honduras. Those humble beginnings started a ripple that expanded to include more supporters in other areas of the country. WaterPartners was formally incorporated in 1993, and since that time, it has helped more than 200 communities obtain safe water supplies and improved sanitation systems. Besides Honduras, WaterPartners has also completed projects in Bangladesh, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, India and Kenya and the Philippines.



### What We Do

The core competency of WaterPartners is the social entrepreneurship that brings resources to bear on the most fundamental of human problems—safe drinking water. Because people in developing countries understand best how to solve their own problems, WaterPartners is committed to locally-based solutions and a decentralized operational structure. WaterPartners forges partnerships with carefully-screened partner organizations in the target countries who understand, and are a part of, the local culture. Thus, solutions can be tailored to fit the needs of each community rather than relying on a technological fix that the community has no way of maintaining. Each of the projects has an active water committee governing the planning and operation of the water system, and users pay a water bill to cover the costs of operating and maintaining the water system. In this way, all of the projects that WaterPartners has supported are self-sustaining, with organizational and financial structures in place to allow communities to independently operate and maintain them on an ongoing basis.

## **The WaterCredit Initiative™**

WaterPartners' most recent innovations pertain to financing. Currently, nearly all of the water projects being built in developing countries are 100 percent grant-supported, which severely limits the number of people who can be served. The new approach pioneered by WaterPartners International, called the WaterCredit Initiative™, challenges the notion that all projects have to be financed totally by grants. By making small loans to individuals and communities as part of a revolving fund in areas where credit is not readily available, WaterCredit is greatly extending the reach of the resources devoted to water supply.

The WaterCredit Initiative was originally pilot-tested in two countries with highly encouraging results. For example, about halfway through the loan cycle in a project in the slums of Dhaka, Bangladesh, the repayment rate has been 99 percent. And in rural Tamil Nadu, India, about 40 percent of loans to project areas have now been repaid with a default rate of less than 10% to date. The program was recently initiated in Kenya and plans are being made to expand into other countries as well.

By empowering people to develop their own solutions and providing the means to accomplish it, WaterCredit has the potential to greatly accelerate the pace of water system creation in the developing world. It also frees up grant funds to be targeted to the poorest of the poor. By offering both grants and credit, WaterPartners provides maximum flexibility in meeting the needs of communities. WaterCredit also maximizes donor dollars, allowing far more people to be reached per dollar invested.

## **The Global Water Crisis**

Every fifteen seconds, a child dies from a water-related disease. Water-related diseases are one of the leading causes of death in the world—killing more than 14,000 people each day—and are responsible for 80 percent of all sickness. More than 1 billion people in the world lack access to a safe supply of drinking water. Twice that number do not have adequate sanitation facilities.

The global water crisis also has harmful consequences beyond poor health. Women and girls spend hours each day walking to collect water from distant, often polluted sources. This lost time is a major detriment to economic productivity and school attendance and plays a significant role in perpetuating the cycle of poverty.



Yordanos Aregawi holds the water that her village currently has to drink in Hile, Ethiopia.

## **The Benefits of Supporting WaterPartners**

Water supply projects provide an immediate, dramatic effect on the health of a community. Child mortality goes down and water-borne diseases are virtually eliminated.

Not only do WaterPartners projects save lives and prevent illnesses, they also improve the quality of life in other ways. By greatly reducing the amount of time spent collecting water—sometimes several hours per day—time is gained for more productive pursuits, such as work and school. This is especially important for women and girls, upon whose shoulders this work disproportionately falls. Abundant water also allows for irrigating gardens, which significantly increases the amount of food available for families, while the surplus can be sold for income. When you add these factors together and multiply them by many households, WaterPartners projects have the power to transform entire communities—a true ripple effect.

Water projects are also extremely cost-effective. For as little as \$25 per person, you can give someone access to safe water for life. In fact, there is no charity that can beat WaterPartners in terms of doing the most good for the philanthropic dollar invested. And because the projects are designed to be sustainable, one gift yields a lifetime of benefits.

## **Creating Your Own Ripple Effect**

The only barrier to saving more lives and transforming more communities is funding. Your gift to WaterPartners will help us bring clean water to people who desperately need it—for less than you might think:

- For \$25, you can provide access to safe drinking water for life to someone who desperately needs it.
- For \$150, you can meet the water needs of a whole family.
- For \$1,000, you can provide a public water point for a 500-person neighborhood in an urban slum.
- And for \$10,000 or more, you can help change the fortunes of an entire village.



No other charity can beat WaterPartners for value in terms of doing the most good for the philanthropic dollar invested.