



A boy in northern Uganda walks toward his community.
Photo by David Uttley, volunteer photojournalist

May All the Neighbors Have Safe Water

Lifewater and its Ugandan partner organization initiate a comprehensive WASH project in northern Uganda

by Leslie Hawthorne Klingler, Communications Manager

Lifewater and its Ugandan partner organization, Divine Waters Uganda, have worked since 2001 to bring water, sanitation, and hygiene education (WASH) to war-torn communities in the district of Lira. The partnership has been fruitful, and this year Lifewater is helping Divine Waters prepare for a large-scale project in the region. **In the course of three years, the project will help over 75,000 people gain safe water, sanitation, and hygiene education.**

Lifewater project director Sam Moore is enthusiastic about this initiative. He says, "Divine Waters has demonstrated that it is well positioned to collaborate with Lifewater on such a large and comprehensive project." From 2001 through 2006 **Divine Waters staff risked their lives as they worked with Lifewater to bring safe water to displaced persons camps.** As people began to move home after years in the camps, the organization helped people begin to meet the WASH needs of their devastated home communities. And last year, Divine

Waters collaborated with Lifewater to carry out a **nine-month WASH promotion soccer tournament** that led to improved conditions in thirteen communities and inspired thousands of tournament spectators to begin thinking about water and sanitation conditions in their own communities.

Project coordinator Adam Feffer adds that **Divine Waters is highly regarded by the Ugandan government.** He shares, "During my last visit to Uganda, I accompanied Divine Waters staff to the state government offices. Every person we met commented on the quality of their work. I got similar comments when we visited the tiny regional government offices. Officials there were willing to drop everything to meet our requests." Regarding the national government, Lifewater director Dan Stevens, who attended the final match of last year's WASH promotion soccer tournament, says, "Uganda's Minister of Water attended the event and thanked us for bringing water, sanitation, and hygiene to so many people."

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While many water development efforts meet only some of the WASH needs in a region, this project aims to ensure that all people in two sub-counties in Lira have access to a nearby safe water source, sanitation, and hygiene education. **The advantage of ensuring complete water coverage with sanitation and hygiene education is that the project is more likely to bring about lasting improvements.** Reasons for this include



Community members in Kirombe, Lira, line up for water at a well provided by Lifewater and Divine Waters. Photo by David Uttley

- ➔ **Wells and handpumps are more likely to last** and be maintained when they are not overused. Overused handpumps often wear out in three months to one year, while pumps with normal use last two to five years without needing major repair.
- ➔ People who enjoy a nearby, adequate safe water source tend to take more ownership of their well and care for it more than people who share a distant or inadequate water source with too many others.
- ➔ **Women and children enjoy a higher quality of life** when they have adequate water coverage. In places where the distance is too far or the line for water at the well is too long, many choose to return to their old unsafe water sources rather than spend hours obtaining safe water.
- ➔ Safe water is much more likely to bring about lasting benefits when accompanied by sanitation and hygiene education.
- ➔ When surrounding communities observe the improved quality of life in communities that have gained WASH, they begin to demand the same for themselves.

Sam says, **“Our goal is for everyone and their neighbors to have an adequate supply of safe water, improved sanitation, and hygiene education.** While we cannot achieve this right away, complete coverage in two sub-counties is an exciting way to work toward this.”

In addition to helping 271 communities and 31 schools gain safe water sources, Lifewater and Divine Waters will engage 165 health promoters and 62 teachers to train community members and students in sanitation and hygiene. Lifewater field trainers will be an important element in this process, equipping these individuals with Lifewater’s *Community Health through Hygiene* and *WASH in Schools* curriculum. Lifewater staff will teach Divine Waters how to adapt the curriculum to their local context.

Training provided by the health promoters will be reinforced through the continuation of the highly successful WASH promo-

tion soccer tournament. The tournament will be continued for three years, with 20 teams representing different villages participating each year. **Divine Waters will coordinate a total of 56 matches per year, each of which will involve half-time WASH promotion songs, skits, and demonstrations.** Attendance per game ranges from 300 to 1000 people.

In preparation for this large-scale project, Sam and Adam recently trained Divine

Waters staff in in-depth monitoring and evaluation techniques. As part of the process, staff created baseline surveys that will help them gain a clear picture of current conditions and develop relationships with the local community members. During the initial months of the project, Divine Waters will also help communities come up with their own indicators of success to strengthen local ownership of the project. Adam says, “Divine Waters was eager to learn advanced planning, monitoring, and evaluation—we were impressed by how readily they soaked in what we had to share.”

While Divine Waters staff members have become influential leaders in their communities, they retain a humble attitude and spirit of service. Witnessing the personal risks and sacrifices that Divine Waters staff accept for the sake of their people, Adam says that he is inspired to give sacrificially of his own time and resources.

The total cost of the WASH project in Lira is 2.65 million dollars. Lifewater has raised 1.65 million and is now seeking individual gifts to cover the remaining one million dollars. With approximately 75,000 beneficiaries, **the total cost per person for safe water, sanitation, and hygiene education is \$35.** If you would like to be involved in helping the people of Lira, please specify this on your donation coupon, check, or online gift.



A woman in Lira returns home with water for her family. Photo by David Uttley



Field trainer Shawn Roberts teaches Agua Para Todos staff about water well construction. *Photo by Fred Proby, Lifewater staff*

Why Should We Go Abroad?

by Shawn Roberts, Field Trainer and Hydrogeologist

As Westerners grow wiser in our efforts to improve the lives of people around the world, we sometimes wonder, What role is there for us to play? We have learned that many roles we previously assumed in our development efforts are actually carried out more successfully by nationals themselves. **So is there any reason for us to do anything else other than donate money?**

I first learned about African generosity by reading the book *African Friends and Money Matters*, by David Maranz. I found out that **Africans tend to be very generous with their money.** When they come upon financial resources, they invest immediately either in their own physical resources or in relationships by giving the money away. If they try to save in the way we try to do, someone, perhaps even someone undesirable, will inevitably request the money, and they will be socially obliged to comply. In many African communities, money is an ephemeral commodity that cannot be kept to oneself.

During a recent Lifewater trip to Mozambique, another field trainer and I spent the last hours of several days relaxing with the well drillers from Agua Para Todos, Lifewater's in-country partner organization. We learned a lot about one another during our easy conversations together in those warm Mozambican evenings. We would ask the young men about their culture and laugh about the things we found unusual. One evening, I turned the tables and asked, "We think that many things about the way things are done in Mozambique are strange, but what do you find strange about us?" **The men laughed, but then answered seriously, "We find it strange that you are so generous."**

At first we thought that the men were referring to our material generosity, but they went on to explain that they were talking about knowledge. **They said that they were surprised by**



A member of the Agua Para Todos drilling team works on drilling a well with the Lifewater training team. *Photo by Shawn Roberts, field trainer*

how willing we were to share our well drilling knowledge with them. In Mozambique, they said, sharing knowledge does not come naturally. Later, as I thought about what the well drillers had said, I realized that **knowledge is the one thing that people in Mozambique can save for themselves,** the one thing they are not obligated to share. Just as I am tempted to hoard money, these young professionals are tempted to hoard knowledge for themselves. In America, wealth is power. However, in Mozambique, where money is never considered personal property, knowledge is one of the greatest sources of personal power.

So when we ask ourselves why we should go abroad personally, rather than just sending money, we need to consider what those young Mozambican well drillers explained. That **the sharing of our technical knowledge is important, but perhaps even more important is the example we set in the teaching and sharing of our knowledge.** We need to show others the blessing of passing on valuable WASH practices and knowledge not just to our family members and friends, but also to as many people as possible. We need to demonstrate that by blessing others with our knowledge, the whole community will be strengthened. **This is one important reason why I will travel again: to help teach the next generation of teachers.**

ATTENTION: Lifewater's need for qualified field trainers continues to grow. Ask God if you might be one of the individuals called to fill this need, and visit www.lifewater.org to find out more.

The Days I Experienced True Partnership

by Laura Rose, Sanitation Specialist

One of Lifewater's core values is "***We practice partnership.***" This article is the first of a series that explores the meaning and significance of this statement.

I recently traveled to Ethiopia with two Lifewater field trainers to facilitate a sanitation course for government and community health promoters. On the last day of the course, the health promoters practiced teaching lessons in the local community of Digibo. **As community members participated, it became obvious that they shared an urgent concern: the drought.** Lack of rain was causing their crops to shrivel and was shrinking streams and ponds—virtually their only sources of water.



Marta and Biranesh, students in Lifewater's sanitation course, practice teaching lessons in the community of Digibo. Photo by Laura Rose

As I struggled to respond to people's fears, an elder in the community rose to her feet and exclaimed, "We believe in God! Together let us pray and ask God for rain!" The people rose to their feet, lifted their hands toward the sky, and began to pray. Sensing the importance of this moment, our Lifewater group joined in. **In that moment I sensed true partnership: people of different nations learning, working, and worshiping together.**

During the same trip, our Lifewater group visited a school where community and government health workers are promoting sanitation among students and staff. The student WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene) club presented dramas, poems and a sanitation quiz to demonstrate ways they are promoting healthy behaviors among their classmates. Smiling and singing, "Praise the Lord!" the students led us out to see their newly constructed latrines. At the end of our visit, elders from the community fed each of us a spoonful of honey to bless us and seal our covenant of cooperation with one another.

Through trips like this one to Ethiopia, God continues to teach me about partnership and affirm that through partnerships amazing things can happen. The fruit of our work is multiplied when we share opportunities with brothers and sisters from other nations, and worship is richer when experienced across boundaries. And, if you are wondering, we offered up our prayers in Digibo on a sunny afternoon, and that night it poured.



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significant sacrifice

Thank You!

If you participated in this campaign and have yet to send in your Easter gift, **please be sure to note “Significant Sacrifice” on your check or online donation** to help us track the source of your gift. We also welcome comments or suggestions for next year.

Thank you to the many churches, small groups, and individuals who participated in **Significant Sacrifice: An Easter Journey**. Over two thousand people used the **new devotional guide** this year, and Lifewater received many positive responses to it. If you would like a sample devotional guide to consider for next year, please write campaigns@lifewater.org or call (888) 543-3426.

“Thank you for sending me the Significant Sacrifice devotional guide. I have used it and observed the forty days by abstaining from ice cream and chocolate, of which I am addicted. However, whenever I think of the people I saw in Congo going to the river, bathing, washing clothes and dishes, and then getting a jug of water to take home to drink, and when I remember the people in Nigeria I saw digging in a dry river bed during dry season to get enough water to meet their needs, my sacrifice does not seem like much of a sacrifice. I am enclosing a check to help someone in the world have safe water.” - Hazel Schofield, Soldotna, AK

“A group from our church did Significant Sacrifice. I gave up chocolate. I slipped several times, then thought, how trivial a ‘need’ compared to the need for potable water.”

- Helga Karker, Kearsarge, NH



from the director

On my down days, I am daunted by the enormity of the crisis Lifewater works to address: one billion people today do not have safe water and more than two billion lack even a simple latrine. **That is too many people waking up every morning to life-threatening circumstances.**

When I feel overwhelmed, it helps to remember that **we are making progress**. When Lifewater began its work in 1977, the number of people in developing countries with access to safe water was only 40 percent and adequate sanitation was less than 25 percent.¹ Today 87 percent of people in developing countries enjoy safe water and 63 percent have adequate sanitation.² While the world’s growing population keeps the actual number of unserved people unacceptably high, that’s significant progress in thirty years.

It also raises my spirits to think of the improving environment in which Lifewater works. In 1977, the organization faced what Lifewater founder Bill Ashe describes as “the abysmal ignorance on the part of the developed world of the need for safe water.” Public awareness of the global water crisis began to grow with the United Nation’s establishment of the Drinking Water Decade for the eighties. Bill, who was invited to attend the meeting where the initiative was organized, says, **“It was quite an experience to sit in the front row of the visitors’ section at the U.N. meeting, and it was wonderful that Lifewater got to be part of forming that program** [that provided safe water to 500 million people worldwide].” The water crisis

has re-entered the limelight in recent years, offering new opportunities for Lifewater to employ its experience and expertise in collaboration with new donors and water development partners.

Finally, it helps me to think of a principle reflected in these comments by Bill Ashe:

“As I grow older I realize that you can look at the problem and be so overwhelmed it freezes you in your tracks. But if you let that happen, you still have the problem. I have learned that it is better to choose one thing to actually do and do well rather than lamenting the enormity of the problem and accomplishing nothing. **That choice to action will be a challenge for your time and resources and perhaps even a risk to your safety and health.** There are all kinds of doubts that can flood in. But when we choose to do what we have been called to do, that’s when the Lord really makes us a blessing. That’s worthy of our best effort.”

To that I say *Amen*. Lifewater has chosen WASH development as its one thing to do and do well. It may be a daunting calling, but it is one that is worthy of our best effort. May the Lord make us a blessing.

Dan Stevens
Executive Director

¹ Lomborg, Bjorn. *The Skeptical Environmentalist*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. 20.

² WHO AND UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation. UNICEF, New York and WHO, Geneva, 2008.



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\$5,000

funds a shallow safe water well for 350 to 500 people in a rural community.



\$1,000

provides a new hand pump to repair a well, restoring safe water to 350 to 500 people.



\$75

purchases a bio-sand filter to provide a family with safe water.



\$25

buys a water test kit for one of Lifewater's in-country partner organizations.