

W4EE success stories: Access to safe water

KEY SUCCESSSES

- + 91 new and 106 rehabilitated boreholes drilled and fitted with hand pumps, concrete aprons, and animal troughs
- + 6 new small water distributions systems (SWDS) and rehabilitation of 4 inoperative ones.
- + 209 water management committees trained in management, operation, and maintenance of water points
- + Installation of 8 monitoring hand pumps to gauge ground-water fluctuations

226,187

Number of people who have received access to safe drinking water

74,200

Number of people benefiting from rehabilitated boreholes

209

Number of operational water management committees

Infrastructure

Thanks to W4EE's provision of access to safe drinking water, thousands of households no longer have to walk long distances to get water from unsafe sources such as unprotected wells, stagnating pools, and river bed pits, all of which are open to contamination. Local supply of clean water has also minimised the risk of serious diseases like typhoid and cholera. Having borne the brunt of water collection duties, women in particular now have more time for productive activities such as farming and petty trade. They can also feel more secure when fetching water as close proximity to water points helps reduce the risks of gender-based violence such as rape.

Prior to the delivery of services, W4EE conducted hydrogeological studies across Torit and Kapoeta States and assessed borehole infrastructure in every county. The supply of safe water involved the rehabilitation of existing but damaged water points, drilling of new ones, and the construction of small water distribution centres on high-yielding boreholes.

It is more cost-effective to rehabilitate boreholes than to drill new ones. The unit cost of rehabilitating a borehole is about €4,500 compared to about €12,000 for a new borehole and hand pump.



Constructing small water distribution systems enables more people to access safe water in large village environments and reduces pressure on hand pumps.



Most beneficiaries gained access to safe drinking water from boreholes or hand pumps that were rehabilitated. This is also less expensive than drilling new ones.



A shallow well at Hai Rei, Kapoeta South that was constructed for vegetable gardening and domestic water supply.



Ensuring ownership: Water management committees

To ensure all water supply services are sustainable, communities must be made aware of their role toward management of these facilities. “You must create understanding that the ownership belongs to them and not to the ones who constructed or rehabilitated it,” WASH Software Advisor and national consultant Pasquina Acidria explains. “We have community awareness meetings where we introduce the idea of sustainability. ‘How will you repair the pump? Keep it running?’ We propose a community water management committee to oversee on behalf – but with the support – of the community.” Everyone agrees on the contribution rate (50–10SSP or in-kind payments like chickens, goats, grains, or honey, made per household on a monthly basis) which is used to pay for spare parts and hand-pump mechanics who do the repairs. Such funds can also pay for nightwatchmen to guard over the solar panels that power water distribution points. But the concept of ownership and contribution toward sustainable water service delivery is being undermined by the perpetuation of free spare parts that some organisations give out. Common ground is needed among all donors to take a development rather than emergency approach whereby communities pay for services and do not become dependent on hand-outs.



Water management committee contributions in Longiro Central and Barawajak.

Capacity-building is a key objective of W4EE. The project has trained 46 state and county technical staff to support and train water management committees at new and rehabilitated water points, including small water distribution systems. Training was also given on monitoring of water points and, in Kapoeta, on updating and managing the water point databases created in 2016.

In Torit State, women are in management positions in all the water management committees, and both women and men have been trained on minor operations and maintenance and given minor repair kits. In addition, an element of private sector drive is injected as commercial farm service centres, established with the help of W4EE, will stock spare parts for repairs in addition to normal agricultural equipment.

“Before 2015, there were no maintenance funds organised and collected by water committees. That is a tangible success of the project. Communities are contributing for access to water and keeping the supply constant.”

Mike Wood, Safe Water & Improved Sanitation Advisor, W4EE Team



W4EE team member Mike Wood provides hand-pump management training in Napotpot, Kapoeta East County, Kapoeta State, to measure static water level in boreholes as part of groundwater monitoring.



The W4EE team responded quickly to a crisis in Kassangor in the far north of the vast Jimo County in Kapoeta State where a community of 7,200 people were in dire need of water as all six hand pumps had broke down through overuse. Following an urgent plea from the governor, a contractor was immediately on site and successfully rehabilitated five of the six pumps. Children were scrambling to drink as the contractor flushed out the dirty water. Hundreds queued with jerry cans in the searing heat to get their share. Once the immediate crisis was resolved, water management committees were formed and trained to maintain the hand pumps. Members of the community now contribute with cash or in kind to the pool of resources needed to cover the costs of maintenance.