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Project Abstract

Fostering Hope through Safe Water in Cameroon

Overview

In the West African nation of Cameroon, Thirst Relief and its partner Life and Water Development Group—Cameroon (LWDG) have successfully installed 500 biosand filters serving approximately 4,000 people with safe water. The need for safe water is especially urgent in the country's rural areas. In many communities, children routinely develop sores from cuts that become infected by washing with dirty water. Many mothers have lost children to water-related disease, and families are constantly battling stomach illnesses.

However, families who own biosand filters provided by Thirst Relief and LWDG report improved health. This frees children to attend school and parents to farm and take care of the home. Safe water restores hope, helping families break the vicious cycle of poverty and disease.

Together Thirst Relief and LWDG are preparing to reach 4,800 more Cameroonians with safe water in 2009. Families will pay a small fee to receive their own filters, training in use and maintenance, and follow-up support. This project will also provide jobs for three Cameroonian technicians and engage youth in each community to oversee filter use and maintenance.

At a glance...

Location

Rural communities in Cameroon,
West Africa

Timeline

January 2009—December 2009

Budget

\$49,830

Raised to date

\$0

Type of water point

Biosand filter

Number of water points

600

People served

4,800

Cost per person

\$10

Average filter cost

\$75

For more information

Carol Nowlin
carolnowlin@thirstrelief.org
1-866-5THIRST

Community testimonials

As a bio sand filter technician, I have been constructing other people's filters and now, I and my junior brother have ours... It is very helpful to the lives of our people from the results that we have been having for the last years. Also, this has helped me and now I can feel employed alongside with other technicians in our community because we are able to buy some soap, cooking oil for our families. -Godlove, biosand filter technician

I am very happy and relieved because in the past years, I have been suffering from Diarrhoea and when I went to the hospital, I was told that it was due to bad water and now I own a filter. I believe I will no longer suffer with diarrhoea. -Joseph, Nkuv Village

Project Objectives

1. Provide access to safe water through placement of 600 filters in families' homes.
2. Provide employment for 3 technicians and educate/engage youth in communities served.
3. Contribute to long-term health gains through training in filter maintenance and health promotion.

About the Biosand Filter

The biosand filter has been proven to be a cost-effective, sustainable way to access safe water where surface water is available. About the size of an office water cooler, each filter consists of a concrete or plastic container filled with layers of sand and gravel.

By the time surface water poured into the top of the filter travels all the way through, it is 95-99 percent pure, thanks to natural biological processes. Users collect the water from a tap built into the side of the filter. To learn more about the biosand filter, visit www.thirstrelief.org and click on "facts."

P.O. Box 436 Lewis Center, OH 43035
866-5THIRST www.thirstrelief.org