Waterlife Community Drinking Water Program

Waterlife India Pvt. Ltd.

Waterlife India sets up Community Drinking Water Plants that can effectively treat all types of contamination and ensure a high-quality water supply.

Launched in 2008, For-profit , Drinking Water , Purification , South Asia: India

http://www.waterlifeindia.com/ info@waterlifeindia.com

Notice

Undefined variable: count
ee/legacy/libraries/Functions.php(680) : eval()'d code, line 89 show details
• **Severity**: E_NOTICE

India

Problem Addressed

Access to safe drinking water is a fundamental need. It is also arguably the most important prerequisite for, and a key driver of, all other socio-economic indicators, such as health and nutrition, education, employment and economic prosperity. However, despite large investments by the government, access to safe and secure drinking water continues to be a major hurdle and one of the biggest challenges facing India.

Around 37.7 million Indians are affected by waterborne diseases annually; 1.5 million children are estimated to die of diarrhea alone; and 73 million working days are lost due to waterborne disease each year. The resulting economic burden is estimated at $600 million per year. In light of this growing problem, it is important to look at decentralized, holistic and sustainable approaches in order to address the water problem.

Innovative Approach

Waterlife engages an underserved community, sets up a community drinking water plant, and works with that village for ten years. They hire local people to run and operate the plant on a daily basis but they take interim responsibility for quality checks and overseeing it. Waterlife's technology treats contamination and ensures a safe water supply.

Waterlife creates a customized solution based on factors such as level of contamination, infrastructure, on-grid or off-grid, and the culture of individual villages. Traditionally, the government set up a centralized water facility which rarely distributed the supply well. The government was more focused on providing access and not about the quality. The water was not decontaminated completely because many methods do not always remove heavy metals and other contaminants even if they are successful at getting rid of bacteria. Iron, nitrate and arsenic each have a high incidence. The government did not have the expertise or professional systems to oversee the functioning of plants in the long-term and the communities did not have the knowledge to handle running the plants. In just a short time the solutions the government implemented became defunct.

In Waterlife's model, the government's role is to provide the initial capital expenditure. Waterlife then charges a small affordable consumer fee and the money that is generated is used for the operations and maintenance such as salaries and electricity charges. The community is also a key funder by providing the land for the plant, the electricity and the water source. This creates a sense of ownership in which the intervention is theirs and they are invested in its success. In addition, operators are hired from the local community. This has created a strong commitment to transparency, as the community has a desire to know about operations.

Program Solution

Waterlife India sets up Community Drinking Water Plants that can effectively treat all types of contamination and ensure a high-quality water supply, meeting or exceeding both World Health Organization and Indian Governmental standards. The government or funding organization provides the capitol expenditures and the local administrative body or village panchayat provides the land, source of water and electricity connection for setting up the plant.

Long-term operation and maintenance is critical to the sustainability of any water-treatment solution. Waterlife's unique business model builds this in by creating sustainable revenue streams to support long-term operation and maintenance. Waterlife operates and maintains the plants for a period of ten years to ensure that the intervention continues to be sustainable and runs smoothly year after year.

Waterlife uses green and environmentally friendly technologies and solutions, thus creating economic, social and environmental returns. They work closely with the government, NGOs, self help groups, leading institutions and other opinion leaders in the villages to ensure sustainable solutions at the ground-level and also address the larger goal of solving water issues in the country.

Waterlife also works to spread awareness and influence attitudes and behaviors with respect to safe drinking water through outreach programs in villages. Their program goes beyond drinking water to include various activities such as setting up of rainwater harvesting structures, recycling and channelling the reject water, setting up and contributing towards a community welfare corps from the plant's revenue stream, providing a free water dispenser at the plant for students and children, and providing local employment.

Waterlife employs a unique and creative combination of the best available green technology and creative business model enabling it to deliver highly affordable clean water to even the most remote, low income, rural and urban communities.