Imagine if the water that came out of your tap could kill you and your children. Imagine if you woke up in the middle of the night needing to use the toilet, and had to go outside, alone, in the dark, to relieve yourself. Many people in the world have to deal with those realities every day. One out of every five people in the developing world lacks safe drinking water, and nearly one out of every two people doesn’t have a sanitary toilet. That causes about 4,000 deaths every day from diarrhea alone. And most of the dead are children.

And to make it worse, many of the so-called solutions to the problem have failed.

Quick fixes don’t work

If you traveled through any developing country, you would see broken water systems and abandoned latrines littering the...
countryside. Women are reminded daily of these failures as they walk past them carrying heavy buckets of dirty water. For a short while after the water system was built, they felt relief and hope. But when the system failed, they had to go back to the polluted water source (often a muddy hole shared by animals) they had hoped to never use again. These women and their families have returned to defecating outside near overflowing and abandoned latrines that once held the promise of privacy and security. Schools have become graveyards of failed water and sanitation projects, keeping many children from attending school.

Too many people worldwide lack access to improved water supplies and toilets. Too many people have seen previous investments in water and sanitation wasted. These realities are not acceptable to Water For People. We believe solutions should last.
here’s a big difference between the celebration for a new pump and for a pump that has lasted 20 years. We want communities to celebrate the latter. That’s why we bring people, communities, organizations, local entrepreneurs, and local government together so that solutions last. Our methods may vary from one place to the next, but in each location water flows, toilets are used, infrastructure is eventually replaced using local resources, and communities no longer need NGOs or charities to raise themselves out of water poverty.

So where others may see only the need for clean water and sanitation, we see a need for communities to pay a share of the cost, build motivation to care for their systems themselves and help information flow, so that we (and you) know what’s working and what’s not. Making it last isn’t a slogan but a way of planning, financing, working, building capacity, and monitoring that eliminates dependence on charity.
THROUGH INNOVATION, INTEGRITY, IMPACT

Innovation is in our DNA. Traditional approaches aren’t solving the problem, and trying to understand what doesn’t work is often as important as identifying what does. So we take a hard look at our own work, and we’re willing to take risks and experiment with new approaches or solutions that show promise at achieving scale. Because at the end of the day, Water For People exists to end the water crisis, not to justify our own existence. Sanitation and water graveyards litter the developing world, and we’re on a mission to change that.

We keep our promises because integrity is crucial. We are intervening in people’s lives, and that carries considerable responsibility. We are asking people with little means to pay for services, and we must therefore make sure that our collective investments last. We monitor our work rigorously so that we know what is working and what programmatic shifts are needed to address the inevitable problems that will emerge.

Growing our impact without growing our footprint means we do three things very well. First, we focus our efforts at a municipal or district level to deliver sustainable water and sanitation services to every household, village, school, and clinic in the area. Full coverage. Second, we insist that all parties contribute financially to their success—including government and local communities. We don’t pay 100% of the costs. Why? Because sustainability requires local financial investment over time. And third, we work to get other government organizations to apply this model in other parts of the country where Water For People doesn’t work. That’s scaling up our work. These three things help us create big impact while keeping us small. Call it a ripple effect if you will. We call it just plain effective.
Water For People is an international development organization working on sustainable water and sanitation solutions across a diverse and dynamic group of 11 countries, from Asia and Africa to Central and South America. We work in drought- and flood-prone areas, arsenic- and non-arsenic affected areas, rural and peri-urban areas. Our goal is to show that supporting long-term, sustained water and sanitation solutions is possible everywhere.

Our work in each location may vary, but our goals for long-lasting solutions to beat the world crisis remain consistent.
JOIN US

We're dedicated to ending the cycle of water poverty and ensuring that no one suffers or dies from a water-related disease. Water For People works in the developing world to assist communities in building robust and long-lasting water and sanitation solutions.

We hope that you’ll join us by supporting our fundraising, messaging, or volunteering efforts. See our website for the latest information on:

• Our programs, partners, and staff
• Our commitment to program monitoring
• Making a personal donation
• Engaging your company through workplace giving, grants, or events
• Volunteering or joining the World Water Corps®
• Staying connected through email, Facebook, and Twitter