KIGEZI DIOCESE WATER AND SANITATION PROGRAMME, UGANDA

A perilous trek for water and ignorance of the dangers of waterborne disease is crippling communities in Uganda. Kigezi is here to help.
WHY WE ARE WORKING THERE

783 million people in the world do not have access to clean water. That problem can be seen starkly in south-west Uganda, a land of hills and valleys. Most villages are on top of the hills, whilst the water sources are at the bottom. Traditionally the children collect water, usually the girls; but the journey is fraught with danger.

Doreen and Jouvllet knew those dangers intimately. They live in the village of Rwanyana and twice a day, every day they were forced to complete a two-hour round trip down the mountain to collect 20 litres of water. Without it their family would have had no water to drink, prepare food or wash with.

The pathway up the mountain is secluded so the girls are vulnerable to attack from young boys herding cattle on the mountain. It's a problem in the whole area, and many girls are at risk of being raped. The journey is also incredibly tiring and takes a long time. Doreen and Jouvllet often missed school, or arrived late because they had been collecting water. This had a big impact on their education and their hopes for the future.
In this area of Uganda, there is also a lack of knowledge about the dangers of unclean water and bad hygiene practices. People don’t know that not washing your hands before preparing food or after going to the toilet spreads disease. As a result there are high rates of water borne diseases like diarrhoea, particularly amongst children.

Climate change has also led to unpredictable seasons and events like landslides, floods, and soil erosion. For a well off community these would be difficult challenges, but for the rural poor of Uganda, they are catastrophic.

AIMS OF THE PROJECT

The Kigezi Diocese Water and Sanitation Programme - or Kigezi for short - works with rural communities in the south west of Uganda to change this story. They want to see communities of people being able to collect water close to their homes. They want to see them using that water well, implementing hygiene practices that keep people safe, and adapting to climate change.

Kigezi succeeds in this life-transforming mission by working through the local church, uniting the whole community around a common goal. They teach everyone about the importance of hygiene, and challenge practices that have led to disease and illness. They work with communities to help them identify the resources they have and what they are able to do. Their aim is always to leave communities more united.

KDWSP provides practical help to enable people to access safe water. Simple harvesting tanks store rainwater that gathers on roofs and gutters. These have the advantage of being constructed close to people’s homes, removing the need to travel to collect safe water.

In order to bring such tanks to communities, KDWSP provides the materials needed and trains people in constructing tanks. This means that they have not only been empowered to change their own situation but they also have developed skills that impact the rest of the community. As others see the benefits of tanks demand for them grows, creating paid work for the trained group.

KDWSP also helps protect existing water springs and installs gravity flow schemes. Gravity flow schemes are spring-fed pipelines that bring water to communal tapstands. Communal tapstands
serve several households from a central location where people can collect water. These are used rather than boreholes in Kigezi, where the terrain makes drilling difficult.

Doreen and Jouvllet know what a difference this makes. Thanks to a rainwater harvesting tank built near their home, they no longer have to make the long trek up and down the mountain. Now they have clean water close to their home, and they can concentrate on their education.

**PROJECT IMPACT**

This project will directly benefit 18,591 people living in rural communities in Uganda by providing them with clean water, and teaching them the importance of good hygiene practices.

£1420 will pay for a church and community to be trained in how to build a rainwater harvesting tank, providing them with clean water for generations to come

£1360 will pay for the training of the Church and the core group so they know the link between water, health, and disease and can teach the rest of the community about the dangers

£500 will pay for Water and Sanitation Clubs to be set up in local schools, so that even the youngest in the community will learn about the power of washing their hands

**JOIN US**

It costs just £37 to provide an individual with safe drinking water, improved sanitation facilities, and the chance of a much healthier future.