

SEPTEMBER **2012** CAMPAIGN

RWANDA



WHAT'S THE PROBLEM IN RWANDA?

Rwanda is the beautiful Land of a Thousand Hills. More than 11 million people call it home, and over 80% of them depend entirely on agriculture. It has no major export revenue and remains overwhelmingly poor, despite improvements made during two decades of rebuilding.

There's plenty of water here--a lot of rainfall and countless mountain springs. But these springs are separated from communities by impossible terrain, and past attempts to harvest rain often proved inadequate or crumbled under poor oversight.

So up to **70% of people in rural Rwanda still trek for hours every day to collect water from rivers.** And these rivers are brimming with contaminants--pollutants from villages upstream and bacteria that can cause diarrhea, a leading killer of children.

The time it takes to collect this water and the toll it takes on health mean so much missed work, missed school, and missed opportunity. For many Rwandans, it means an **unbreakable cycle of poverty.**



WHAT'S THE PLAN?

Change is coming here, and it's flowing from the nation's **vision to cut poverty in half by 2020**. To do this, the country must first grow its economy, and that means the people of Rwanda must be healthy and productive. For that to happen, everyone needs to have clean, safe water.

This is where the NGOs come in, each working to bring solutions to one of Rwanda's 30 districts. In Rulindo District, just north of the country's capital, our partners at Water for People have taken up the Rulindo Challenge. In collaboration with the local government and individual communities, they plan to achieve 100% water coverage in the district by 2014.

Whereas some organizations build projects and consider the feat accomplished, **Water for People has a bigger strategy**. They call it *Everyone Forever*. *Everyone* means every individual must have access to clean, life-saving water—including the elderly, the sick, and the disabled. *Forever* means that the water solutions they build should last indefinitely and negate the need for future outside interventions.

In Rulindo, Water for People started by taking a comprehensive inventory of the need, existing infrastructure, and physical conditions present in every corner of the district. **Then they mapped out a plan to achieve full coverage.**

This September, we're joining the Rulindo Challenge. We're going to help Water for People build infrastructure where it's needed most, starting in two sectors--Shyorongi and Ngoma. The \$1.7 million we plan to raise through the September Campaign will help fund seven large-scale water systems--two brand new systems in Ngoma and five rehabilitated and extended systems in Shyorongi.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Each system will protect clean water at its source. They'll use a combination of electric pumps and gravity to move the water through a network of pipes to the villages, clinics, and schools that need it. **These seven systems will feed 106 tap stands and serve almost 26,000 people.** When we're finished, everyone in Shyorongi and Ngoma will have access to clean, safe water.

But the solution doesn't stop at the tap. To ensure that water continues to flow long after we're gone, these systems will be built and managed through an innovative public-private partnership.

For each water system we fund, **the district government will contract with an operator** to run the system's maintenance, administration, and finance as a private business. The operator, in turn, will hire and train a team of technicians to care for his investment. Equipped with bicycles or motorcycles, cell phones and tools, they'll keep the operator in constant contact with the communities his system will serve.



For their part, **communities will participate in the actual construction of the projects.** They'll elect Water Committees to oversee the finished taps and appoint the final players in the system--water sellers.

Selling water can be a prestigious role, but it also carries a lot of responsibility. A tap stand must have reliable flow and dependable hours. The filling process must be orderly. Careful record must be kept of each family's water consumption so that every drop is accounted for, and no one is overcharged.

The fee a seller collects will cover operating costs, but as long as taps are working and prices are fair, it can also provide her with a reliable income. **If taps break or prices rise too steeply, people will return to collecting water from dirty rivers** and the seller's income will dry up. Everyone has an interest in making sure that never happens.



WHAT DIFFERENCE WILL IT MAKE?

The seven water systems of Shyorongi and Ngoma will be built to last many years--through expert design, quality construction and upkeep, and long-term investment by people at all stages and levels of the project.

They'll also serve much more than clean water. These systems will offer people better health; more time to devote to work, school, and family; greater productivity; and the chance to pursue new opportunities. In action, **they could short-circuit the poverty cycle.**

And once every last person in Shyorongi and Ngoma enjoys clean, safe water, we'll move on to the next sector, and the next, **until everyone in Rulindo District has access to life's most basic need--forever.**

