



ANNUAL REPORT

2022/23



VISION

Clean, fresh water - one village at a time.

VALUES

BRAVERY

Our bravery emboldens us to go where others don't, challenge stereotypes, be unwavering in our convictions and hold true to our mission.

TRUST AND TO BE TRUSTED

Our consistent transparency, respectful storytelling and honest/genuine approach to our work enable us to develop trust and be trusted by our benefactors, donors and stakeholders.

WHOLEHEARTED

Acting with heart, we are kind, generous in spirit, support justice, and the responsibility of shared humanity.



WHO WE ARE

Water for a Village (WFAV) is an Australian-based charity that provides clean fresh water to villages in the Simien Mountains of Ethiopia. We are a human rights-based organisation that works in a consultative manner with each community we assist.

Each improved water source is built completely by hand by the local people under the supervision of a local contractor and while everyone in-country is paid, all Australian members of WFAV are voluntary, ensuring that all of our donations go directly to completing projects.

OUR PURPOSE

Our sole aim is to install water facilities that deliver a plentiful supply of clean, fresh water throughout the year to each village.



FROM THE CEO *Dr Catherine Wheatley*

It is 10 years since I first went to Ethiopia. I was walking through the Simien Mountains and was horrified by how children suffered so much due to the lack of clean water. They suffered so much from chronic infections that they were malnourished, in pain, and sad. So Peter and I decided to give a gift of a handdug well to a small village called Michiby and the people were elated. And to show the village that we personally cared about them, we decided I would organize the build myself. I worked with an engineer from the local council, a local contractor, an interpreter (Yalew), and labour was sourced from inside the village. Everyone who worked on the site was paid the correct rate and all building supplies were bought from the nearest town to keep money inside the country. Together we constructed the local solution to the local problem. On my return trip to the village the following year, children were no longer getting sick and the teachers were run off their feet with the high attendance rate that accompanied the improvement in child health. Mothers had hours more at home every single day because their water supply was now plentiful, efficient and in their village and one of the elders said he had never seen his village so happy.

This is how Water For A Village was created.

FROM THE CEO (CONTINUED)

Every year since then (except for 2021 during Covid), I have returned and continued the work of our brave little organisation on behalf of our incredible donors. In Ethiopia our In-Country Manager, Yalew Tafete, has accompanied every day since that first well, and operates at an exceptional level to support our work. At home in Australia, our endeavours are made possible through the support of a wonderful Board, great volunteers and Peter.

This year we built or fully renovated 11 improved water sources – this brings us to a total of 111 that supply 52,000 people with water - water that promotes the health of everyone but especially children, assists children to get to school, and restores a little dignity.

In the village of Dobach high in the mountains, one of the contractors invited Yalew and I several times to his parent's home for something to eat. His parents are both in their nineties - extremely elderly in this country. Their family of four generations lives in a group of five homes in the mountains with dirt floors, young animals inside the homes to protect them from the cold, tidy yards, simple but good food, people popping in and out of each other's home, and a wonderfully warm atmosphere.

As I left his home on the last visit, the patriarch accompanied me slowly a short way to show his appreciation, despite his great frailty. He clasped my hands in both of his and repeated his thanks many times especially for the effect that clean water has on children. He was reluctant to let my hand go but finally did. As I walked down the mountain he stood and watched until we could no longer see each other.

This is what can we achieve together.

Thank you.



FROM THE CHAIR

Vanessa Ratard

For ten years Water for a Village has been providing clean, fresh water – one village at a time. This achievement has been made possible through the unwavering dedication of the CEO and founder Dr Catherine Wheatley, our in-country manager Yalew Tafete and the extensive network of collaborators, supporters and volunteers, not least founder Peter Wheatley.

Donors, large and small, every dollar has made the difference in more than 50,000 peoples lives, as Water for a Village has been able to maintain a strategy that sees every dollar donated by private individuals going directly to improving water sources in Ethiopia rather than administrative costs. This is a rare model for a charity, but we will strive to find a path where this is possible, so we can continue to help realise clean water for everyone.





OUR ACTIVITIES

CONSTRUCTION

In 2023 in conjunction with our end-users and the Water Offices of Meksagnet and Ambagiorgis, we coordinated, oversaw and financed the building or entire restoration of 11 improved water sources that included:

- 1 new tanker
- 1 new “on-the-spot” installation – this installation does not need storage capacity because the flow is so high. Instead, it supplies a flow of clean water for the users straight from the source.
- Extensive repairs to two hand dug wells
- Extensive repairs to an existing tanker
- Four installations in which water is collected from a spring, runs it into a large concrete tanker (24m³ – 30m³ capacity) and feeds two or three collection points by gravity (“reticulated system”)
- Extensive repairs to an existing reticulated system that supplies several hundred homes and a school of 1000 children involving the:
 - Renovation of a concrete reservoir
 - Renovation of two water collection points fed by the tanker
 - Installation of a concrete water point at the school with eight taps where children can wash their hands and get a drink.
 - Extensive modification of an existing reticulated system – adding an additional 700m of piping and a water collection point.

These improved water sources provided work for 11 contractors, around 500 local people and supply 4 schools, 1 health clinic and approximately 12,000 people.

OUR ACTIVITIES

CARETAKERS

The proper management of the improved water installations we build is crucial as appropriate care, maintenance, and education of the end-users ensures the sites will continue to supply clean water. It is an essential role of water provision but is too often neglected leaving many sites broken and non-functional across the country.

WFAV met with the head of the Zonal Office whose role is concerned primarily with education and training and his aim is for end-users to be trained in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) so that they can be responsible for the care of their water source, organise and pay for its maintenance, and thereby enhance its longevity.

This is not a new idea but having the people to drive it in the municipalities is new. Under the guidance of the councils, a committee of seven (men and women) selected from each village undertake training provided by the councils so they can oversee their installation. The committee's role is to assist the (paid) caretaker and to educate the end-users. Each household pays a small amount of money towards the payment of the caretaker and maintenance of the installation. Maintenance is conducted by a contractor (who comes from inside or outside of their village). This is a sustainable method assuming that adequate training has been undertaken by the committee members and that the woreda staff are involved and enthusiastic.

With the enthusiasm of the zonal office to bring in the committee system and new blood in the woreda offices to carry this out, WFAV has committed to paying for committee members representing all of the sites we have installed in 2022 and 2023 to undergo a two-day training course with the woreda. This will be a staged process coupled with the phasing out of the caretakers we have currently engaged. Meksagnet Woreda is planning for all caretakers currently paid by WFAV to be phased out in 12 months.

EVALUATIONS

We continue to strive to improve quality of our work, enhance ownership, reduce costs and promote the sustainability of the improved water sources we install. Planning involves the end-users, especially girls and women, and all labour is sourced from within the community. In particular, we:

- purchase our own materials (cement, sand, stone, reinforcing, barbed wire, hardware), organize cartage, and store everything securely at the municipality offices where the council staff distribute them to the contractors.
- screen the water at all completed sites for quality indicators, heavy metals and coliforms.
- renovate and/or modify existing installations where we can to reduce wastage of supplies and to leave a smaller footprint. This work offers improved efficiency by leveraging off existing infrastructure.

One of our evaluation measures is input from collaborators like the government personnel we work alongside. To that end:

- Mogas, the new head of the water office in Meksagnet said that he enjoys working in such a quick, neat and efficient system and he was surprised and happy to see how our improved water sources are completed in such a short period of time.
- One woreda staff member said “thank you for coming all this way to care about people you don’t even know. I can’t believe that you keep doing it”
- several woreda staff said they appreciate how we spend so much time in the planning of the improved water sources and in creating good relationships with them, the contractors and the end-users.



STATEMENTS OF COMMITMENT TO ADHERE TO ACFID'S CODE OF CONDUCT

WFAV is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and is a member of the Australian Council For International Development (ACFID). As a signatory, we are committed to and abide by, ACFID's Code of Conduct and as such, we work with complete transparency and integrity and strive to take all opportunities to reflect and improve on our practice.

Compliments, enquiries or complaints may be made to the president@waterforavillage.net

Complaints about non-compliance with ACFID's Code of Conduct Committee at complaints@acfid.asn.au

WFAV has Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status as a Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) so all contributions over AUD2 are tax-deductible for Australian citizens.



CONTACT US



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