

For Africans, a unique nonprofit brings clean water and...

Trickle-Down Benefits

Despite globalization, more than one billion people across the planet lack access to clean water. That's almost inconceivable. Yet the situation is so dire that unsafe water and lack of sanitation together are currently the single largest cause of illness worldwide, resulting in an estimated 6,000 deaths every day. Without intervention, this situation is likely to worsen. By 2025, as many as 2.3 billion people could be living without access to clean water, according to Dale Jones, the CEO of PlayPumps International, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit organization. Its mission is to bring clean drinking water to Sub-Saharan Africa, thereby enhancing public health for millions of people.

What's really unusual about PlayPumps is, quite simply, its method. The nonprofit provides communities with access to clean drinking water through a child-friendly device known as the PlayPump water system. Patented water pumps double as merry-go-rounds for youngsters whose schools often lack recreational equipment. Mr. Jones comments, "It's every child's right to have access to clean drinking water and the ability to play. It's our goal to help make that happen."

The target for Mr. Jones and PlayPumps is to install 4,000 pumps in 10 Sub-Saharan countries, which would provide clean drinking water for about 10 million people. Although rich in benefits, the pumps are priced at only \$14,000 each, which covers the cost of equipment, installation, and maintenance for 10 years. Significant progress has been made toward achieving the nonprofit's goal, with more than 1,000 pumps already installed in South Africa, Mozambique, Swaziland, and elsewhere.

PlayPumps' unusual approach has won it the support of a blue-chip list of corporate, foundation, and individual donors. These include Steve and Jean Case, who serve on PlayPumps' global advisory council; the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation; and the Coca-Cola Africa Foundation. Detroit Pistons' basketball player Theo Ratliff is also on the advisory council.

Support keeps growing. Global Ethics, a U.K.-based charity, started raising funds for PlayPumps in 2005 through the sale of its bottled One water. Its slogan? "When you drink One, Africa drinks too." Let's all drink to that. ■



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Dale Jones
CEO, PlayPumps International

Do You Want to Get Involved? Contact PlayPumps International at www.playpumps.org