



WATER OF LIFE

RWANDA



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Compassion has been working in Rwanda since 1979, and currently supports 72,421 children through 288 church-based projects. Compassion partners with churches to help them provide Rwandan children with the opportunity to rise above their circumstances and become all God has created them to be. Compassion staff have identified the most pressing needs in the country and incorporated these as priorities in the overall strategy for holistic development in Rwanda.

31 per cent of the Rwandan population, 3.4 million people, do not have access to safe water. This has a serious impact on health as well as infant mortality with 3,000 children in Rwanda dying from diarrhoea every year.¹

Compassion therefore intends to provide Water of Life filters to every Compassion-registered child in Rwanda. Phase one of this initiative funded the successful distribution of Water of Life filters to 19,272 Compassion-assisted children and their families in Eastern Rwanda. In addition, the 211 Compassion projects in Rwanda also received Water of Life filters to provide safe water to children on project days. This initiative will allow a further 7,896 Compassion-assisted children and 15,792 caregivers who are located in the southern districts of Rwanda to participate in Compassion's Water of Life programme.

Each family will be given a Compassion Water of Life unit which contains:

- ④ a filter and attached bucket
- ④ a second bucket to catch the now-safe water in a clean container
- ④ a syringe that is used for rinsing the filter with safe water

Compassion's Water of Life units are based on the same technology developed for kidney dialysis. Each filter is made up of tiny micro tubes with pores hundreds of times smaller than the diameter of a human hair. These pores remove deadly bacteria and allow only safe water to pass through for drinking. After pouring dirty water into the bucket from piped sources or lakes, rivers, ponds or puddles, the water flows through the filter and comes out completely safe to drink.



ACTIVITY REPORT

PROJECTS	Compassion child development centres in southern and central Rwanda
INITIATIVE	Compassion Water of Life: The Distribution of Safe Water Systems
RESPOND NUMBER	RW-014484
BENEFICIARIES	47,376 Compassion-assisted children and 15,792 caregivers
FUNDING	£4,487
START DATE	Winter 2014

Through this RESPOND Initiative, children and their families in four districts in the southern province of Rwanda will be given safe drinking water for life. The projects and beneficiaries in each district are as follows:

District	Projects	Registered children	Siblings	Parents	Total
Huye	12	3,384	16,920	6,768	27,072
Nyanza	6	1,692	8,460	3,384	13,536
Gisagara	3	846	4,230	1,692	6,768
Ruhango	7	1,974	9,870	3,948	15,792
Total	28	7,896	39,480	15,792	63,168

Initially, a WaSH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) expert was contracted to conduct training with all the beneficiaries. Caregivers of Compassion-assisted children were divided into WaSH accountability groups of about 20, according to their location. Since January 2015, the groups have been receiving training both in the use of Water of Life filters for safe drinking water and in good hygiene and sanitation practices.

All four districts have now completed the training phase, the Water of Life filters have been purchased, and the distribution phase will soon begin.

Through this initiative 47,376 children and 15,792 caregivers, more than those originally proposed, will directly benefit from the water filters. The beneficiaries' neighbours will also be able to access potable water from the filters, further increasing the impact of the initiative.

Challenges

The water filter supplier did not provide the needed drill bits, as initially expected. Through negotiations with the project staff, the supplier agreed to provide six drill bits.

Several new projects were opened in the beneficiary areas after the initial proposal was submitted. Most of these projects have similarly critical water challenges, however it is unlikely that this initiative will be able to provide for these additional needs. Project staff hope that through continued discussions with the supplier, a future RESPOND Initiative may be developed to address the increasing need for water filters among the beneficiaries.

“We expect an end to the difficulties associated with the collection of firewood and boiling of water among the families of Compassion-supported children. Boiling of water is expected to end. We also expect an end to the sicknesses related to drinking unsafe water.”

*John Mukiza, Project Director at RW-530 EPR
Buye Student Centre*



The caregivers being trained to clean the filter using the backwash method

The trainer demonstrated how to set up the buckets in order to aid the flow of water through the filter and filling the second bucket with safe water



Several beneficiaries who attended the training drank the filtered water to prove its purity after filtration

