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# VOICES

## FROM THE FIELD

fall 2007



News about Water For People's work in Malawi, the "warm heart of Africa."



## MALAWI AT-A-GLANCE

<b>Population:</b>	13,013,926 (among the most population-dense African countries)
<b>Languages:</b>	English, Chichewa
<b>Per capita income:</b>	US\$600
<b>Life expectancy:</b>	42 years
<b>Under-five mortality rate:</b>	125/1,000 live births
<b>Where We Work:</b>	Rumphi District Chikwawa District Blantyre (peri-urban areas)

Source: World Factbook and UNICEF 2006

Water For People has been working in Malawi since 2000 and has successfully served tens of thousands of Africa's poorest people with the sustainable provision of safe drinking water and improved sanitation. Water-related diseases, including cholera and typhoid fever, are common throughout the country. It is estimated that sanitation coverage in rural areas is less than 30%, so improving sanitation has been an important focus of Water For People's work.

## From Feces to Fertilizer: Water For People's Innovative Approach to Sanitation Wins \$200,000 World Bank Award

by John Kayser, Communications Manager, Water For People

Who knew that human feces could be converted into a valuable fertilizer for crops?

Some might question this practice, but in reality, it is completely safe and the resulting fertilizer is excellent. This decidedly "green" concept formed the basis for Water For People's award-winning project proposal at the Development Marketplace, a global competition that encourages innovative solutions to the world's biggest development challenges.

In May, Water For People was selected to win the maximum award of \$200,000, and was one of only 22 grants awarded from a field of more than 2,900 applications. The proposed sanitation project in Malawi is designed to reduce the incidence of diarrhea through hygiene education, the use of children's latrines, and the production of compost for sale. What's more, the program is self-sustaining and will generate much-needed income for some of the poorest people on the planet.



The impact of compost on agriculture. The maize on the left was planted with composted human waste; on the right, commercial fertilizer. Photo: © Water For People / by Kate Harawa

## From Feces to Fertilizer... (continued)

Funded by the World Bank and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the global Development Marketplace grants ranged from \$50,000 to \$200,000. The competition is held every 12 to 18 months by the World Bank and brought finalists to Washington, D.C., for an in-depth review by a jury of World Bank officials and development professionals. Among the finalists in attendance was Water For People's country coordinator for Malawi, Kate Harawa, who visited the United States for the first time in her life. Needless to say, it was a productive visit.

Specifically, the goal of Water For People's proposal is to reduce diarrhea by 40% in two rural Malawian Traditional Authority Areas, including 31 schools and more than 100 villages, by improving sanitation practices and facilities. The multifaceted approach targets toddlers and young children by promoting the use of ecological latrines while eliminating open defecation.

The program engages children as change agents to introduce improved hygiene practices to the household, a model that is thought to be effective for promoting long-term changes in health and hygiene practices in the developing world. Children



A child-size "arbor-loo" latrine provides children with a safe sanitation solution.

Photo: © Water For People / by Kate Harawa

throughout the region will receive child-size "arbor-loos" that allow them to defecate safely and hygienically. Ash and dirt are added to feces after each use, which helps eliminate odors and promote composting. When the pit latrine is full, the slab can be moved to a new location and a tree planted in its place.

The program targets adults by making full-scale composting latrines available to each household under a creative financing arrangement in which the cost of the latrines is paid back over time with the income generated from the sale of the compost. Once the debt is repaid, the family can sell its compost for much-needed income. (Soil is poor in much of Malawi and fertilizer is a sought-after commodity.)

"Here's a program that transforms fecal waste from a health threat to an income-generating product," says Ned Breslin, Water For People's director of International Programs. "It creates an unsubsidized, sustainable sanitation service that can be replicated by other communities. It is also creatively linking local governments, NGOs, and the private sector to improve health. Everybody wins."

Breslin and Harawa together defended the proposal before jurors at the Washington event. "We competed in an environment in which many jurors at the World Bank felt that water and sanitation should not be included in this year's competition," confides Breslin. "Many felt that awards should be offered to more traditional health interventions, like HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and immunization. Our selection suggests that our work stood out, as it offered a unique way to tackle diarrhea, which is the second largest killer of children worldwide. It also suggests that the centrality of water and sanitation to improved health is understood."

The award means the program will become a reality. Water For People–Malawi expects to receive the funds from this award in October 2007, and is already beginning to implement the program in two districts.

Water For People has high hopes for the successful implementation of this pilot program, not only in the two districts but across Malawi. "The real mark of success will be a measurable change in hygiene practices and a decrease in the incidence of diarrhea among children," says Breslin. "We'll be monitoring progress closely, but I have every confidence that this program will deliver results on many levels." ■

**Our mission:** Water For People helps people in developing countries improve their quality of life by supporting the development of locally sustainable drinking water resources, sanitation facilities and health and hygiene education programs.

**Our vision** is a world where all people have access to safe drinking water and sanitation; a world where no one suffers or dies from a water- or sanitation-related disease

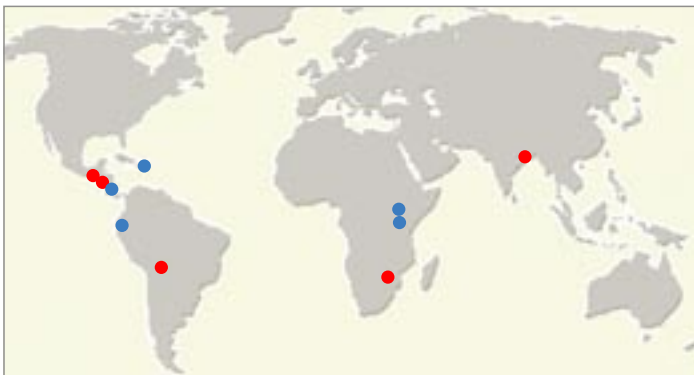


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# Water For People Announces Five Countries for Expansion

Water For People has made the bold decision to expand its reach and increase its impact in the developing world. The Water For People Board of Directors announced plans to expand its international development program to five additional countries over the next five years.

After reviewing the results of extensive scoping studies, including data gathered from site visits to 10 countries under consideration, the Board of Directors voted unanimously to support expansion into Ecuador, Nicaragua, Rwanda, Uganda, and the Dominican Republic. These new program locations will strategically complement existing work in Bolivia, Guatemala, Honduras, India, and Malawi. The adoption of these countries will double the number of countries served by Water For People and will position the organization to reach its target of directly benefiting 1,000 new people per day by 2011.



The five countries were selected following a careful review of 10 countries identified in earlier desk studies. Each was evaluated by a team of World Water Corps volunteers, who conducted extensive scoping studies during April and May 2007. Volunteer teams visited each country to assess needs, meet with potential partner organizations, and evaluate the potential for the successful implementation of Water For People's community-based model.

Water For People plans to launch work in Ecuador and Nicaragua in 2007, followed by Rwanda in 2008. Work in Uganda and the Dominican Republic will be initiated over the next four years as resources allow.

"It was a difficult decision, as all of the countries under consideration have a real need for Water For People's work," said Fred Elwell, president of Water For People. "A great deal of credit is owed to our World Water Corps volunteers and the members of the International Programs Committee, who did an excellent job in researching the need and potential of each country." ■



Photo: © Water For People / Jby Wendie Valentine

## Greetings from Malawi

For Water For People—Malawi, the past few months have been busy—and extremely productive. We are making some fantastic progress with the promise of even greater things to come.

I had the privilege of visiting the United States on two occasions between May and July, first to compete in the Development Marketplace award competition and again to meet with the Denver staff and my colleagues from around the world as we participated in a very beneficial planning workshop.

The highlight of my visits was meeting many volunteers who are so deeply committed to our work. I had no idea of the deep conviction that so many people share in helping us meet our goals. I now know that I have many friends that I can count on. I also became more aware of my responsibility not only to the people we serve in Malawi, but to those throughout North America who believe in Water For People. It was very motivating.

I am delighted at the news that Water For People will be expanding into Rwanda and Uganda, which will strengthen Water For People's reputation and effectiveness in Africa. It is good news for all of us, and I look forward to collaborating with my African neighbors to increase Water For People's impact in putting an end to the water crisis across this continent.

Over the next few years, Water For People—Malawi will be focusing efforts in three districts: Rumpfi in the north, Chikwawa in the south, and the outskirts of the urban center of Blantyre, where the population is exploding but there are very limited water and sanitation services.

We have ambitious plans. Our goal is to directly benefit 40,000 Malawian people per year with improved water and/or sanitation by 2011. With your continued support, I know we will be successful. Our staff in Malawi is energized and we have wonderful support from the Denver staff. Most of all, we have thousands of supporters like you who believe in us. We won't let you down.

Thank you for your continued support,

Kate Harawa  
Country Coordinator, Water For People—Malawi

## Water For People Names CEO



Colleen Stiles

*"Water For People is poised to become the international humanitarian organization supporting the fundamental freedoms of access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation."*

—Colleen Stiles

The Water For People Board of Directors unanimously approved the appointment of Colleen Stiles as the organization's new chief executive officer. Ms. Stiles was carefully selected from an impressive field of nearly 100 candidates and brings significant leadership experience in both the corporate and nonprofit sectors.

Over her distinguished 24-year career, Ms. Stiles has built a reputation as an exceptional strategic partner in business and philanthropy. She has helped numerous leadership teams engage in dynamic, interdisciplinary partnerships that have unleashed new resources, built organizational capacity, and increased impact.

"Colleen has impressive experience and an exciting energy that will serve Water For People well as we grow and continue to increase our impact," says Fred Elwell, Water For People's

board president. "She brings a dynamic leadership style and an unwavering commitment to our mission."

Since 1998, Ms. Stiles has served as CEO at Greatness in Giving, an international nonprofit consulting firm that she founded. There she provided philanthropic and strategic business services to foundations, corporations, nonprofit organizations, and private entities.

From 1993 to 1996, Ms. Stiles served as president and CEO of Pikes Peak Area United Way, where she was a change agent to reestablish donor and community credibility. She led initiatives in collaborative outreach, campaign transparency, and the establishment of new programs for volunteerism and philanthropic leadership recognition.

Ms. Stiles is a published business writer and an in-demand speaker on such topics as overcoming personal adversity, putting the feet on integrity, angel investing, and the new entrepreneurial spirit. She holds an MA in Communications, *magna cum laude*, from Wake Forest University and a BA in Communications and Sociology, *cum laude*, from the University of Minnesota. She lives in Colorado Springs, Colo., with husband, Kevin Kraus. ■

[www.waterforpeople.org](http://www.waterforpeople.org)

News about Water For People's  
work in Malawi!  
Next Issue: Honduras



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