



# ONE MILLION LIVES

EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS  
WITH ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER

A PROPOSAL SPECIALLY PREPARED FOR

**Bloomberg  
Philanthropies**

Since 2006, charity: water has been on a mission to bring clean and safe water to people around the world. Clean water is not only a basic human right but also a catalyst for broader community development, *especially for women and girls.*

We take an adaptive and community-driven approach to supporting innovative, inclusive, and sustainable water projects. We've partnered with rural communities and local partner organizations across 29 countries to fund 137,015 water projects that deliver clean water, hygiene, and improved sanitation to more than 17.4 million people around the world.

**And we're just getting started.**





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## SUMMARY

### FUNDING REQUEST\*

**\$50M over 3 years**

\$42M for Water Projects

\$8M for Operations

### ESTIMATED ANNUAL BREAKDOWN

\$14M for Water Projects

~\$2.66M for Operations

~\$16.66M per year

### IMPACT

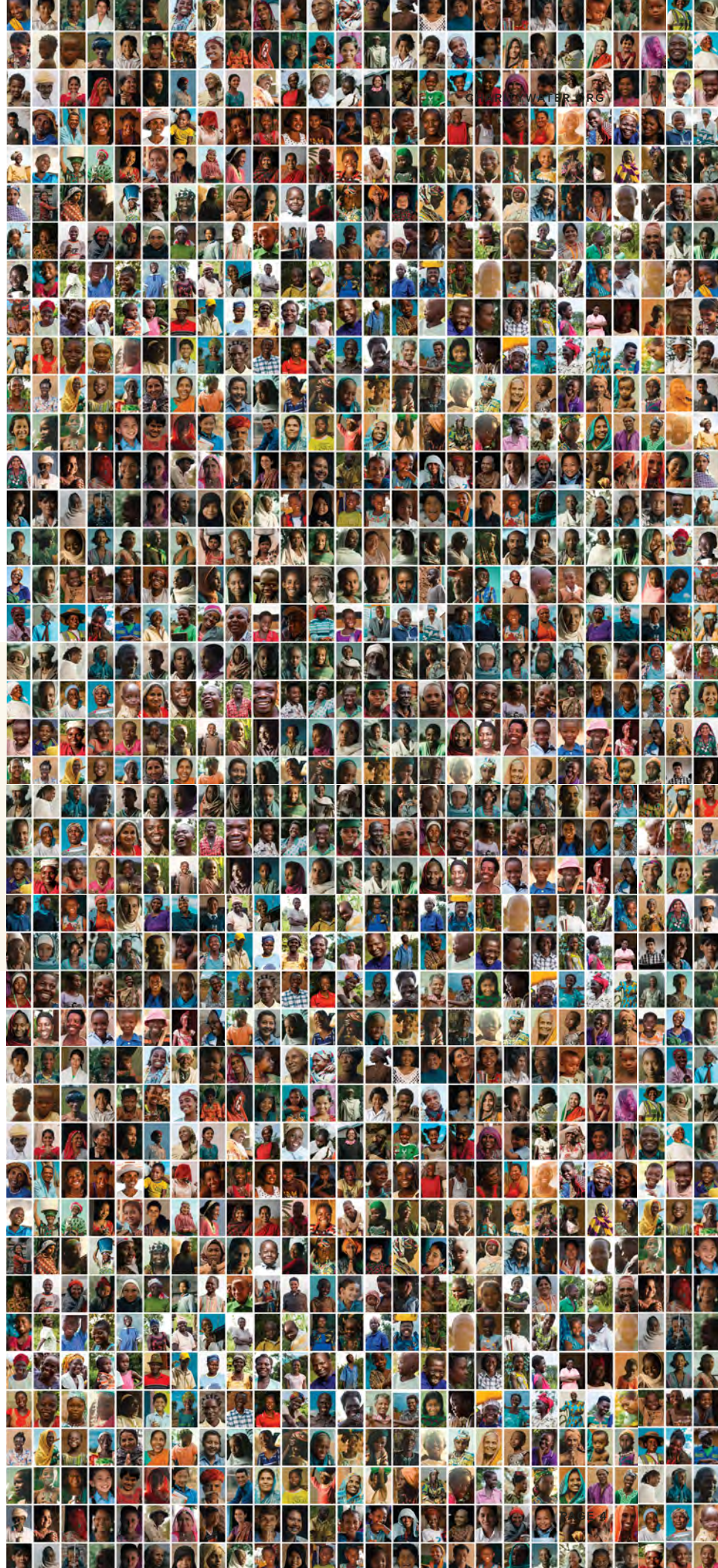
**One million people  
with sustained access  
to clean water, hygiene,  
and improved sanitation  
in sub-Saharan Africa  
and Asia.**

### OBJECTIVE

To improve the well-being of women and girls by providing sustainable access to clean and safe water in rural communities.

#### \*Please note:

1. The funding timeline can scale to 5 years, if preferred.
2. The allocation between Water Projects and Operations may shift over the next 3-to-5 years to ensure project outcomes are reached. Any change will be communicated to Bloomberg Philanthropies, all while ensuring we reach one million lives within a \$50M budget. Please see the budget summary on page 20 for more information.





**THE WATER CRISIS:  
AN URGENT, UNMET NEED**

**Clean water has the power to dramatically improve health and well-being, empower women and girls, open pathways to education, and spark economic growth.**



**Yet, 703 million people live without clean water**, and 78% of those who lack basic access live in rural and underinvested communities.

Those living in these areas often spend hours walking for water. They typically rely on surface water, like a river or pond, or an unimproved water source, like an unprotected handmade well. It's common for animals to share — and pollute — these sources.

Consuming contaminated water is linked to the transmission of diseases like diarrhea, cholera, typhoid fever, and hepatitis A and E (WHO). Children under five are over 20 times more likely to die from illnesses caused by unsafe water and inadequate sanitation than from conflict (UNICEF).

Access to clean water is also a necessary driver of economic development and empowerment in communities, especially for women. Universal access to basic water services could give women a total of 77 million additional working days per year (WaterAid).

**Every \$1 invested in improved water and sanitation yields \$4.30 in economic returns (WHO).**



**WOMEN AND WATER**

**While the water crisis is a human issue, it is unquestionably a women’s issue.**

The burden of collecting water and the negative impact that comes with it disproportionately falls on women and girls, who collectively spend 200 million hours walking to collect water for their families and communities every single day (UNICEF). The work is unpaid, laborious, and time-consuming, locking women into a cycle of poverty, abuse, poor health, and disempowerment. It compromises their ability to attend school, earn an income, and live with dignity.

**This pervasive issue is known as “time poverty”<sup>1</sup>.** It’s a symptom of a more fundamental problem that furthers gendered social norms — norms that give men power over women, assign lesser value to women and their contributions, and maintain an inequitable distribution of power between genders.



**“We used to spend all day getting water from the open well. Sometimes we didn’t even get water. But now it’s easy. We wake up early and do work quickly; we have time to do other jobs and earn money. It has changed our life.”**

— **UMU**, HAIRSTYLIST, MALI



**UMU**



## WOMEN AND WATER

### For women, the water crisis is personal.

Without access to water, women and girls are more vulnerable to abuse, attack, and poor health outcomes, limiting their ability to survive and thrive<sup>2</sup>.

Grace and Sarah, two young girls in Uganda, had their lives upended after being attacked and raped while walking to collect water for their family. Both became pregnant. Their hope for the future — a shared dream of becoming doctors — disappeared.



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### “My life changed. My dreams were cut off.”

— GRACE, UGANDA

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The danger women and girls face is compounded by the heightened domestic violence water insecurity sparks at home. The main point of contention? Time. Time spent collecting water means time away from other household duties, school, earning an income, and engaging in community activities.

Women and girls also rely on safe water, sanitation, and hygiene to manage specific health needs related to menstrual hygiene, pregnancy, and postpartum health for both mother and child.

During menstruation, women and girls are often forced to sequester in private quarters because they are seen as “unclean.” A lack of education and information around menstruation, especially in rural communities, reinforces social stigmas and negative attitudes that perpetuate shaming, bullying, gender inequality, and violence toward women and girls<sup>3</sup>.





## WOMEN AND WATER

### Empowered women create empowered communities

The intrinsic link between clean water and women’s empowerment is clear<sup>4</sup>. It is essential for community, social, and economic development and is especially critical for advancing women's and girls' social and economic progress.

To make meaningful and sustainable progress, improvements to water access, sanitation, and hygiene at home, school, and health centers must not only be gender-sensitive and promote gender equity but also elevate the voices and roles of women and girls in the design, implementation, and maintenance of water projects.



**“In the past, we didn’t have time to do more jobs. But because of the tap, we can make pots, dress hair, and sell things like mangoes. We have time to do all of it. Having a borehole has changed our lives.”**

— **BINTOU, POTTER, MALI**



**This is why creating opportunities for the inclusion and empowerment of women, girls, and other marginalized groups is our central priority.**

We view a successful water project as one that involves women in all decision-making and provides them with the necessary education and tools to maintain the project's functionality for years to come. Investing in community-led water, sanitation, and hygiene services offers an opportunity to address broader issues tied to women’s empowerment.





TOGETHER, WE CAN

# TRANSFORM ONE MILLION LIVES



## THE NEXT PHASE IN YOUR LEGACY OF GLOBAL IMPACT

Universal and sustained access to clean and safe water is our ultimate goal. With the right resources, we can reach this global milestone within our lifetime. When we do, it will mean millions of lives saved; a safer, more equal, and dignified world for women and girls; greater economic productivity; reduced water pollution; and improved school attendance.

Over the next five years, we have an organizational goal to reach another 15 million people with clean water and keep water flowing for 35 million people — impacting a total of 50 million people.

**Funding from Bloomberg Philanthropies will accelerate impact at scale and substantially contribute to moving the needle on this critical global milestone.**

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**“Just because a person is poor, it doesn’t mean they deserve poor solutions.”**

— **JOE MADIATH,**  
FOUNDER OF GRAM VIKAS,  
ONE OF OUR LOCAL PARTNERS

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## YOUR \$50 MILLION INVESTMENT

will scale a multi-country portfolio of water projects over the next 3 years to:

1

**Improve access to clean and safe water for one million people<sup>5</sup>** by building high-quality new and rehabilitated water systems. A core condition is to ensure that all water points are easily accessible for all community members, reducing the collection time and water burden, specifically for women and girls.



2

**Facilitate gender balance and inclusion in water management structures and activities** to advance the health, safety, empowerment, and leadership of women and girls as well as the longer-term functionality and community ownership of water points.



3

**Build the capacity of a robust network of local partners** led by people (including women) from the communities served and leverage their expertise to ensure effective, durable, and locally-tailored programming.



4

**Drive rigorous data collection** to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and scale of water project delivery and impact. We aim to prove the use of every dollar invested, not only to supporters but to communities themselves.





Your investment can directly impact one million people in places like

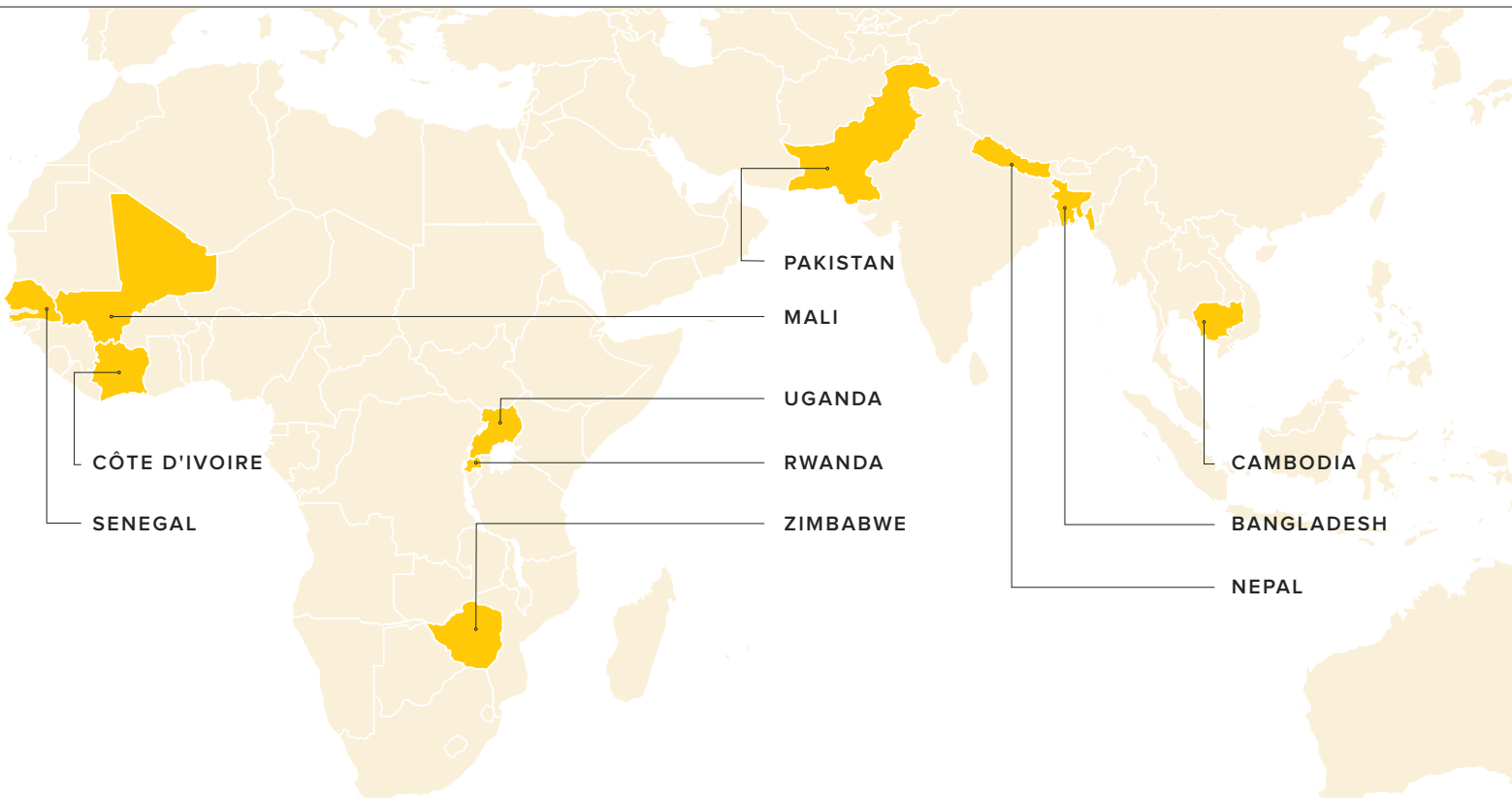
## **BANGLADESH, CAMBODIA, CÔTE D’IVOIRE, MALI, NEPAL, PAKISTAN, RWANDA, SENEGAL, UGANDA, AND ZIMBABWE**

The charity: water team reviewed its global programs spanning 22 countries across sub-Saharan Africa and Asia to identify countries aligned with Bloomberg Philanthropies' area of work. This map represents a selection of countries we could structure our partnership around, though there is always potential to consider other countries in our broader portfolio over the course of the partnership.

Across the world, 8 out of 10 people who lack access to clean water live in rural areas. These are the people we strive to serve. We prioritize working in countries with the greatest need, the highest rates of poverty, and with 700,000 or more people without basic access to clean water. The locations we choose are those in which programs can be implemented with limited interruption and local communities or governments can sustainably manage water systems.

### **Please note**

Over the course of our partnership we may need to reevaluate geographies depending on local context and community needs. If funds need to be reallocated to a different country, we will notify Bloomberg Philanthropies immediately and will maintain the same transparency and accuracy in reporting for all completed work. We will ensure your funding continues to be allocated toward projects and activities aligned with the impact target to reach one million people.





## OUR APPROACH

**Our work is implemented exclusively through local partners and with local communities, knowing that the best and most sustainable solutions are designed with community buy-in and ownership.**

We've worked with 55 implementing partners over the past 16 years. These partners share our vision of ending the water crisis and work closely with local communities, leaders, governments, mechanics, and suppliers to accomplish lasting change. They are local experts with demonstrated experience in the rural water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) sector.

We work with our partners to ensure that water solutions, services, and supporting activities are responsive to community needs, match the unique local context, terrain, and climate, and effectively deliver sustainable and equitable access to clean water. Each of our local partners has a demonstrated track record of providing sustainable access to drinking water at scale and empowering local communities in the process.

We aim for multi-year partnerships, ideally 10 years minimum, with annual work plans and continuous communication and reporting. And while we do establish partnerships with the long view in mind, our country partners are subject to change if the situation requires it. Where partners under this program shift, we will notify Bloomberg Philanthropies.

Each water project typically takes 21-24 months from fund deployment to completion. This process includes phases of technical design and feasibility work, physical implementation, and ongoing community and local government engagement. At the outset of each project, we work with our local partners to conduct localized needs assessments and develop a comprehensive work plan, budget, and monitoring and evaluation plan to ensure high-quality implementation and impact.





## EMPOWERING WOMEN

Our partners create opportunities for advancement through a variety of approaches, always considering local context and culture and ensuring that programs carefully address the unique challenges and security risks women, girls, and other marginalized groups face without access to clean water.

They also ensure representation in the design and management of water projects by prioritizing inclusion and involvement in water user management committees, training women to be village water point mechanics, and including menstrual health and hygiene activities in their programming across communities, schools, and health centers.

Inadequate training opportunities often prevent gender parity in the technical fields common to the water sector. Preparing women for these roles requires investments in skill-building classes and hands-on internship opportunities. For example, our partner GOAL Uganda offers internships exclusively for women studying engineering, providing crucial job experience to help them succeed.

Another partner, WHH Zimbabwe, has created opportunities for women to serve as village pump mechanics: technicians who play a crucial role in ensuring the functionality of water pumps. Traditionally a male-dominated profession, **today, more than 40% of the village pump mechanics trained as part of WHH Zimbabwe's program are women.**





## EMPOWERING WOMEN

Time and again, we see how access to clean water is a catalyst to advancing opportunities for women.



MARIAM

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We've heard testimonials from women like **Mariam** in Mali who used to juggle managing her restaurant with crossing a busy road to collect water several times a day. She'd leave to get the water she needed and return to long lines of unhappy customers. Now, with access to clean water at her local market, she's able to give her full attention to her business. And her profits show the results: Before, she would barely exceed \$18 in daily revenue. **Now, she's making about \$65 a day.**



FUNGAI

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After her involvement in helping her community in Zimbabwe gain access to clean water, **Fungai** was elected by her village to lead the health club and **mobilize community efforts to adopt healthy habits.** She says, "I take pride in the fact that the practices are being accepted. If people all around come to this community, they know that something different is happening here."



BHARUKALA

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Another woman, **Bharukala** in Nepal, uses clean water to maintain her vegetable garden. She sells the produce for extra income, approximately \$25 a month, and uses it to buy school supplies, medicine, and other essentials for her family. But she's gained more than additional income. She shared, **"The project has not only met the water needs in the village, it has also supported women empowerment here.** We now take part in various public events and share our views on the issues related to us without any hesitation."



ROM SAYRY

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Before her family received a BioSand Filter, **Rom Sayry**, a mushroom farmer in Cambodia, wasn't able to consistently tend to her crops. Drinking unsafe water made her family sick, costing time and money they couldn't spare. But now, with access to clean water at her doorstep, **her business has grown from two mushroom mounds to seven — and her income has tripled.**



## MEASURING IMPACT

With your investment, we will aim to achieve the following results over the course of our partnership:

- Improved access to reliable water service for one million people.
- Improved inclusive community water stewardship and management.
- Improved water quality to a safe level for consumption.
- Improved access to sanitation facilities, specifically for women and girls.
- Improved hygiene through behavior change and knowledge.
- Achieve 90% functionality of water points over a 10-year period (a functionality level well above the standard in the water sector<sup>6</sup>).
- Reduce water collection time, specifically for women and girls.

**The majority of people served under this program will be women and nearly half will be youth (age 0-14).**





## MEASURING IMPACT

Through charity: water’s monitoring and evaluation framework, our local partners collect data on a range of water, sanitation, and hygiene key performance indicators (KPIs). The data collected provides detailed insight into the impact of our work and allows us to continuously make evidence-based program improvements. In all our programs, 18 KPIs are measured across five core themes: water access, water quality, sanitation, hygiene, and WASH management (see table).

<b>WATER ACCESS</b>	Quantify the levels of water services that beneficiaries have access to, levels of functionality, and the water collection burden that they bear to utilize these services
<b>WATER QUALITY</b>	Measuring chemical and water microbial quality parameters
<b>SANITATION</b>	Access to improved sanitation and reduction of open defecation practices
<b>HYGIENE</b>	Access to hygiene supplies and use of hygiene supplies and/or facilities
<b>WASH MANAGEMENT</b>	Management of WASH activities in communities and/or institutions

More broadly, we measure achievement by the number of daily users at charity: water-supported water points. For us, the term “daily water users” means the average number of people using water from a specific water point on a daily basis. This includes all people who draw water daily and anyone for whom they draw water (such as household members). To understand more nuanced information, like the gender of users, our partners rely on a variety of resources, including government censuses, district data, and Department of Health surveys. We also reference World Bank national-level country data.

Data is primarily collected through baseline and endline surveys using mobile data collection software. Water quality testing is conducted at

local labs or with field testing kits. Our local partners collect, clean, and analyze the data using templates and guidance from charity: water. Our team then verifies results and works closely with our local partners to generate action plans to incorporate learnings into multi-year plans with each of our partners.

We conduct sustainability evaluations every four years to monitor the longer-term performance of water points in coordination with local partners, community stakeholders, and local government actors who manage water points after construction. As part of these evaluations, we survey a sample of water points to ensure they continue functioning and collect water quality samples tested for E. coli (a fecal indicator for bacteria).



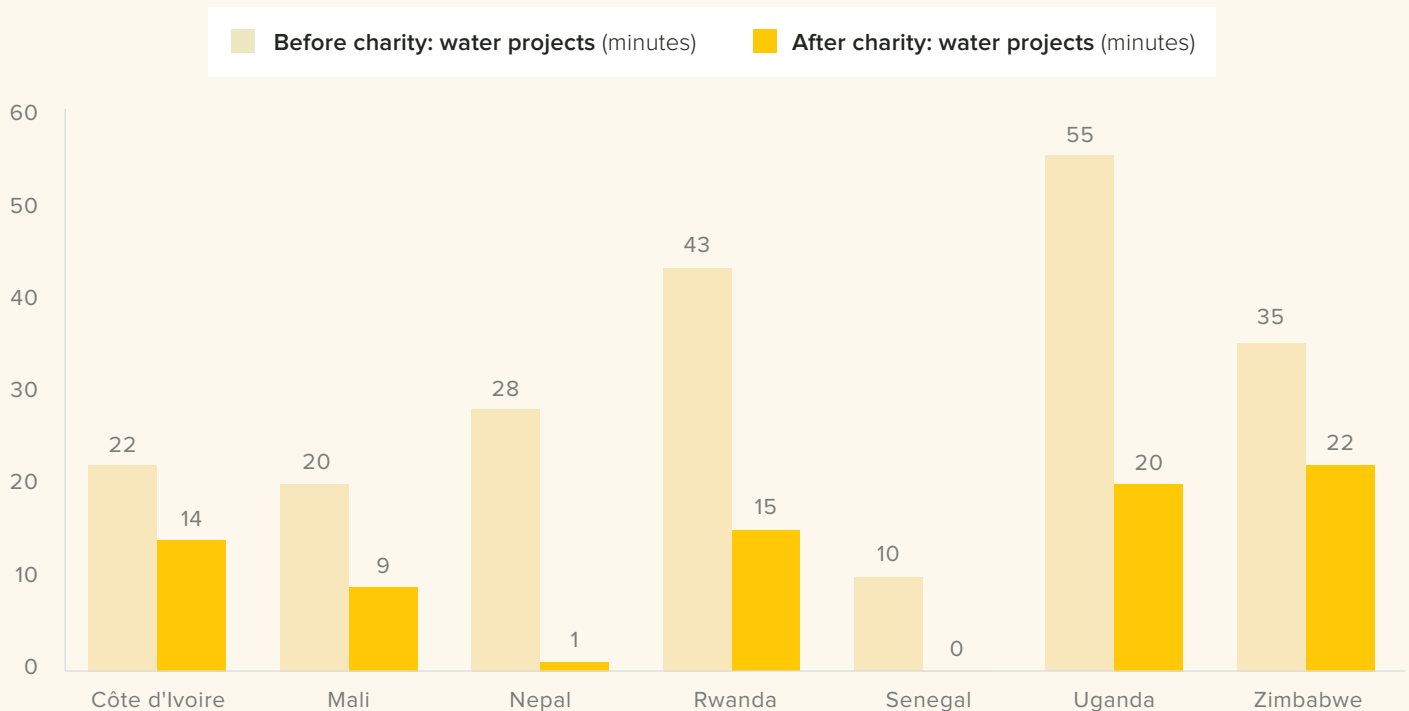
## MEASURING IMPACT

We have collected more than 64,500 household surveys across 18 countries and anticipate reaching 90,000 household surveys by the end of 2023. By bringing clean water closer to the community and people’s homes, **the surveys show that we are making progress in cutting down the average water collection time, most notably for women, by an average of 70 minutes per day.** Along with reducing water collection time, charity: water-supported water points are among the longest-lasting in the sector: **Over 90% of our**

**projects meet the World Health Organization’s standard for low-risk drinking water over a projected 10-year span.**

Through community consultation, qualitative interviews, and in-depth reviews of academic research, we also strive to collect and understand the long-term and secondary impact of clean and safe water, specifically improvement in school attendance, health, women’s empowerment, and economic opportunities.

This graph illustrates the average round-trip collection time for water before and after charity: water projects were implemented across the geographies targeted in this proposal. Our projects have a proven impact on reducing water collection time, especially for women and girls. Reduced collection times directly alleviate the water burden women and girls carry, specifically related to safety, health, and time poverty.



**GRAPH CITATION**  
charity: water, 2020-22. MAP Framework Annual Check-In Baseline data. Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Nepal, Rwanda, Senegal, Uganda, Zimbabwe.

Please note that data on reduced water collection time in Bangladesh and Cambodia is not available because we are either largely supporting school-based water points or improving water directly in households in these countries. We don't yet have data on water collection time in Pakistan, as this is our newest program.



## SUSTAINABILITY

Our work doesn't end when a water point is constructed. We don't consider a project complete until local communities feel empowered to manage and maintain their water point. Through local leaders, innovative sensor technology, and trained mechanics, we're committed to empowering communities to take charge of their water projects and keep clean water flowing without interruption.

Rather than following a "one size fits all" approach, we support a wide range of water solutions. We rely on the expertise of our partners to determine which water solution is the most appropriate for the specific needs of each community. Local contractors, mechanics, and geologists are consulted and the broader community is encouraged to participate in the entire process, from planning to implementation.

Our projects function to enable water projects to last at least 10 years. Water management and longer-term monitoring plans are developed and community water user committees and maintenance structures are formed to support sustained access to safe water.



## SENSORS

We've developed and deployed a first-of-its-kind remote sensor program to monitor the water flow and functionality of our water points with real-time data collection. This predictive technology has the potential to revolutionize the water sector and is a key component of our sustainability strategy.






## SUMMARY BUDGET

Below is a breakdown of the anticipated annual and total investment from Bloomberg Philanthropies to directly reach one million people over the next 3 years\*. Each year, we can provide a more detailed country program outline, offering insight into the project budget by country.

	2023	2024	2025	TOTAL
WATER PROJECTS	\$14M	\$14M	\$14M	<b>\$50M over 3 years</b> <hr/> <b>One million people served</b>
OPERATIONS	\$2.6M	\$2.7M	\$2.7M	
TOTAL	\$16.6M	\$16.7M	\$16.7M	

\*Please note that while the funding timeline would conclude in year three, we expect to reach one million lives directly by year five, in line with our project delivery timelines.





"The day that  
you provided  
clean water to  
our community,  
we became free."

— IRENE, UGANDA

Thank  
you





## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Time poverty: Obstacle to women's human rights, health, and sustainable development  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7688061/>
- <sup>2</sup> <https://wires.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/wat2.1619>
- <sup>3</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/water/brief/menstrual-health-and-hygiene>
- <sup>4</sup> [https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/wash-documents/jmp-2023\\_layout\\_v3launch\\_5july\\_low-reswhowebiste.pdf?sfvrsn=c52136f5\\_3&download=true](https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/wash-documents/jmp-2023_layout_v3launch_5july_low-reswhowebiste.pdf?sfvrsn=c52136f5_3&download=true)
- <sup>5</sup> Based on World Bank data on the national breakdown of gender and age for each of the countries targeted. The majority of people served under this program will be female and nearly half will be youth (age 0-14).
- <sup>6</sup> One in four hand pumps remain non-functional across Sub-Saharan Africa. Foster et al., 2020. *International Journal of Water Resources Development*, 2020, 36, (5), pp. 855-869