



USAID provides 12,000 people in the capital city of Mauritania with clean water

Getting a Drink of Water in the African Desert

Challenge

To get a glass of water in Mauritania, a country that is 75% desert, is a difficult task. People stand in line at government installed water 'fountains' fighting each other and animals for a chance to fill their containers. If they are lucky enough to get water from the ever-short supply, it is almost always contaminated by the mud surrounding the taps, making it dangerous to drink. Getting water is even harder for those who do not have access to taps. They are forced by circumstance to purchase water from dirty, donkey-drawn carts at high prices. Women then must carry the water long distances back to their homes. Families purchase the absolute minimum amount, often times less than what is recommended for the family needs.



Photo: World Vision

A Mauritanian child enjoying a drink of clean water.

Thanks to new clean water cisterns, residents of the capital city of Nouakchott no longer worry about their water supply.

Results

The new cisterns provide 12,000 people in the capital city with clean water. The water cisterns are not only a source of clean water in the community, but are also a base for strengthening community cohesion, which can lead to further initiatives that help to improve the lives of the poor in the area. The effort in working together to raise the funds helped to create greater cooperation among the various cooperatives. Profits are used for maintenance of the cisterns, and also for community income-generating projects.

Initiative

USAID's Mauritania Antipoverty Program provided a \$1.8 million five-year grant for new clean water cisterns to help poor residents living in Nouakchott, the capital city. World Vision built forty-two water storage cisterns around the city from funding provided through commodity monetization of USAID's Food For Peace Title II commodities. Monetization is the sale of donated U.S. commodities in a foreign country to generate funds for development activities.

The communities of Nouakchott contributed approximately 10% of the total cost of the cisterns and appointed committees to manage and maintain the cisterns. Elmedina El Mauna Warra is a group in the Elmina zone that benefited from the first water cistern in the area. In order to raise the finances necessary for the community contribution, the group coordinated efforts of fourteen cooperatives from the zone, which suffers from a continuous shortage of water.

Success Story



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