

## Sustainable Clean Water Turning a Failing 10-year “American” Well Project into a Sustainable Ugandan-Owned Clean Water Success

### Future: Wells and the Business of Clean Water Franchising

*Jesus is the Living Water, for He said in John 7:38, “Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. And Proverbs 31:16-20 tells us about profit, productivity, and helping the poor - “She goes to inspect a field and buys it; with her earnings she plants a vineyard. She is energetic and strong, a hard worker. She makes sure her dealings are profitable; her lamp burns late into the night. Her hands are busy spinning thread, her fingers twisting fiber. She extends a helping hand to the poor and opens her arms to the needy.” And in John 4:10, Jesus talking with the Samaritan girl at the water well said, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink’, you would have asked him, and he would have given you Living Water.”*



Over a 10-year period the church funded an unknown number of bore-hole wells – some thought maybe 20 wells had been funded; others thought maybe 8 wells; but after 10 years no one at the church knew how many wells, or where they were, or – more importantly, were they still working . . . ?

Sustainable Missions, Inc./International (SMI) undertook the project<sup>1</sup> to find and visit every well, catalog them, number them, GPS/locate them, and assess the working/non-working status of each well.

Initially, SMI undertook the project to provide **accountability** for this valuable source of clean water.



SMI found all 13 wells, cataloged and numbered them, GPS located and photographed them, **trained** young well mechanics, **repaired** all of the broken wells, and implemented an ongoing **Maintenance Schedule** with 65 local indigenous community men (4 to 5 members for each community's “**Water Council**” for the 13 wells) responsible for repair & maintenance of **their own** community water well.

SMI initially trained – then American SMI team members “Got out of the way<sup>2</sup>”. Indigenous community members took over !

<sup>1</sup> SMI missions’ efforts consist of business characteristics and principles: there needs to be accountability for labor and money being spent, initial “seed capital” may be invested, there is a demonstrated understanding of project expectations prior to starting, understanding how “success” is determined, and measurement criteria for determining the results and outcomes.

<sup>2</sup> SMI precludes “doing for them”; SMI works “with and alongside our brothers and sisters”. SMI believes in training, and then letting indigenous community members “do it” and “own it”. Indigenous managers lead their own projects with community members.



Andrew Leads Clean Water Well Repair Project



Well Mechanic Trains Local Community



Local Water Council Repairs Their Own Wells

SMI provided some initial “seed capital” and hired Andrew, SMI’s Business & Water Manager. SMI also hired a well mechanic, Tarsus, and trained Andrew and each community’s 10 local indigenous men to repair and maintain *their own* community’s well.

SMI provided consulting, accountability training, logistical training, mechanical well repair training, technical services, and just a “little nudge” of “you can do it” – and Andrew and the **communities are doing it !!**

**Andrew now leads** the ongoing efforts to **train** community members in water source maintenance, and **leads** the **inspection**, and **community repair and maintenance** efforts.

Andrew manages this entire effort with community support. Andrew’s latest email describes, “Well No 5 Got spoilt on 20-Oct and the natives collected money and we repaired it on 1-Nov 2013. We used another well technician because Tarsis was busy and could not make it to Kiburara.”

**Andrew organized, Andrew ordered the well parts and had them delivered, Andrew hired the Well Mechanic, Andrew taught the community to fix their own wells, Andrew managed the tracking and metrics related to costs, mean time between repairs, water quality.** The American SMI team members did not need to be involved. Andrew had it under control, and he oversees the entire process into the future !

The **community funded** these ongoing well repairs, and **Andrew leads the community** by organizing, hiring the well mechanic, delivering the well parts and materials, and assuring completion of all tasks, including **tracking** the repair dates, logging **metrics** relating to costs incurred and duration between repairs, changes in water quality.

These wells are now **community wells** (not muzungu wells).

**Results<sup>3</sup>:** a trained leader and clean water manager, ongoing training of community well mechanics, accountable community Water Boards, tracking and measurement of water factors – no more involvement needed from American SMI team members.

<sup>3</sup> SMI brings business principles to missions’ work. SMI emphasizes community ownership, accountability, efficient spending and allocating scarce resources for broader outreach, training indigenous peoples for long-term sustainability, and effectively managing assets. Water Franchising promotes entrepreneurship, employment, local economies, community commerce, and sustainable clean water for improved health.