

World Water Day

Bringing water to the world since 1867



As the UK recovers from and counts the costs of the winter floods, it is hard to see the water that wreaked such havoc here as being not just benign but precious - but for everyone water is life. Yet in 2014 the number of people worldwide who lack access to safe water is estimated at over 780 million – one in ten of the world’s population. Around 7000,000 children die every year from diarrhoea caused by unsafe water and poor sanitation and half the hospital beds in developing countries are filled with people suffering from diseases caused by poor water, sanitation and hygiene.

Littlehampton in West Sussex is a small sea-side town from where a solution to water shortage has been available since 1867 when, in response to a cholera epidemic, two local businessmen sunk a tubewell to bring a clean water supply to the town and thus prevent the water-borne disease. Since then Dando Drilling International Limited have provided the means to access groundwater supplies and thus brought fresh water to communities on

every continent of the planet. Groundwater makes up about twenty percent of the world’s fresh water supply, which is about 0.61% of the entire world’s water, including oceans and permanent ice and is often cheaper and less vulnerable to pollution than surface water.

The company is involved in the design and manufacture of drilling rigs and ancillary equipment for a diversity of purposes but especially for the drilling and maintenance of waterwells and customers include large multi- and bi-lateral agencies such as the UN, NGOs, Government departments and private contractors. Once the drilling rigs have been delivered, often to the most inaccessible and harshest of areas, one of Dando’s highly experienced drilling engineers will spend some time with the crews commissioning the equipment and training the operators. The account below from a Dando engineer demonstrates the way in which women bear the brunt of lack of accessible and water and the benefits that accrue from a fresh water supply.

“In the middle of the African bush we entered a village to drill a water well for the villagers, most of whom had never seen a European before. The daily routine for the women of that village was to get up in the morning around 4 o'clock, strap the baby on their backs and put the washing inside the five gallon bucket, then put the bucket on their heads to walk the 5/6 miles to the nearest water which is mainly a stream. Once there they do the daily washing, wash the baby and then fill up the 5 gallon bucket. They strap the baby to their backs once more, strap the wet washing around their waist so it is at the front and then lift the gallon bucket of water on their heads before walking the 5/6 miles back to the village. Once there they carry on with the days other chores of cooking and cleaning. The five gallons of water is only for essential things like cooking and drinking but it is often contaminated.

The villagers are suspicious and cannot believe that by the end of the week they will have their own clean water supply. On average it takes about a week to mobilise in the village, set up the rig and equipment, drill the borehole, establish that there is a decent supply and install the hand pump. It takes a 24 hour pump test of the well to establish that there is enough water in the borehole.

When the villagers first saw the water coming out of the ground they run around the village to try and fill every pot they possibly can and pleading with you to stop pumping because in their eyes the water is being wasted.



At this stage of the pumping the water is very dirty because of the drilling having taken place. After 4 hours the water starts to clear and comes out of the borehole a milky white colour. Again they run around the village emptying every conceivable water container and fill up with the cleaner water despite you telling them that is not the water they want but be patient because the water will become crystal clear but they take no notice. After 6 hours of the 24 hour pump test the water starts coming out of the borehole crystal clear. It is when they go crazy, again emptying all their water containers and refilling with the clean water. This is a big event in the village and they want to celebrate. When there is nothing left to fill they start washing all the children. After this has been done they gather around the machine clapping, dancing and singing. This is the time that I slip away and retire to my caravan to write up the reports of the day on commissioning work.

One particular day I was in the caravan and there was a knock at the door. One of the crew members said to me the village chief wanted to talk to me so stepping outside the caravan there is a bit of an entourage. Through an interpreter I was told there was a gift for me and the crew such as a goat which they can ill afford, eggs, flour and whatever vegetables there were available.

Working on drilling rigs with an African crew in remote rural village locations can sometimes be very lonely but the rewards are greater, making it all worthwhile”

Dando Drilling International Limited continue to be involved in many everyday miracles. Read more on www.dando.co.uk

