



abundant
water.org

What is Abundant Water?

Abundant Water Inc (AW) is a 'not-for-profit' humanitarian development organisation sharing the innovation of clay-pot water filters (CPWF) with indigenous potters in the Lao PDR and elsewhere. We are a secular, non-political association incorporated in Canberra, ACT, Australia. AW is an open and inclusive organization that has rallied young volunteers from every continent in the cause of developing and transferring CPWF technology with communities in need of clean drinking water. These simple ceramic water filters are made from natural materials using traditional techniques and are able to eliminate waterborne diseases such as dysentery, gastro-enteritis, cholera and typhoid that are endemic to many rural villages. In Lao PDR we partner Global Development Group on our 'project' – J623N Abundant Water - training potters in making CPWFs.

The AW project integrates basic water filtration technology (a concept proven in ANU research: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clay_pot_filter) with local Lao potting techniques. This approach is developing local capability and ownership and transferring (and sharing) knowledge and expertise rather than transplanting (or donating) alien systems, technologies and money. The generosity and enthusiasm of the young volunteers has enabled AW to develop an on-line international organization with an 'open-source' structure that administers the field work in Lao PDR and oversees the collaboration with like-minded partners working elsewhere. The 'open-source' nature of AW means we are interested in partnership not ownership. Thus the organization, technological innovation and development model are being freely shared with other like-minded organizations so that the AW project can be replicated elsewhere. This has resulted in interest from every continent.

Why does Abundant Water exist?

One sixth of the world's population do not have access to clean drinking water and up to 80% of all sickness in the developing world is caused by inadequate water and sanitation. The removal of water-borne pathogens by ceramic water filters can prevent much of this illness. High-tech solutions, however, have proved to be unsuitable for production and use in developing countries especially in rural and remote communities. Abundant Water is directly meeting this need for a cheap and simple indigenous water filter to remove common pathogens from village water supplies and reduce the incidence of water-borne disease.

Rural and remote communities are unable to afford and maintain expensive hi-tech water filter systems. For these communities the most appropriate system is a decentralised low-tech system that draws on their traditions and is congruent with their beliefs. AW, therefore, works side by side with villagers sharing the CPWF innovation, introducing testing and quality control and facilitating the return of the potters to their communities as micro-financed businesses. This new cottage industry not only introduces CPWFs to the village but also begins to educate the community about clean water, sanitation and hygiene.

Progress so far

The Abundant Water project began in July 2008 with a modest grant from Canberra Rotary for Sunny Forsyth to start a pilot-project introducing the CPWF to Lao potters. An open source organization was formed to facilitate technical development and administration of the pilot project on a shoe-string budget. The Abundant Water website was created to connect the growing legion of volunteers becoming involved in the project. Abundant Water Inc. was incorporated in Canberra, Australia and a Management Board established with expertise across a range of disciplines to ensure sound governance of the project and organization.

A team in Lao PDR, including an experienced potter, translator and testing labs, was recruited to begin developmental work. The potter was introduced to the technology proven at the ANU and once she had produced a viable filter cup began to adapt it to more traditional Lao forms. Tests at the Lao Government Laboratories concluded the pots were viable water filters. The team experimented with firing regimes and flow rates to develop a domestic filter suited to the local requirements. These filters were tested and the water certified as safe by the Institute of Food Research Laboratories, Kasetsart University, Bangkok. In this process the AW team in Vientianne took the original pot through 6 iterations to arrive at the current unique Lao form. This form is now ready to be implemented by a number of international NGOs in their development villages in Lao PDR.

A training compound has been established on the outskirts of Vientiane to enable the training of potters and the continuation of development and experimentation. A broad network of Water and Sanitation professionals began following the project and offered technical advice and feedback. As a consequence AW has been alerted to the desperate need for low-tech low-cost filters for disaster relief following cyclones, earthquakes, floods and tsunamis. Accordingly, AW is now also adapting the CPWF production model to experiment with the mass production of pots fired in brick kilns and the use of crushed concrete in creating versatile disaster-zone filters.

Who is involved?

Abundant Water is an open and inclusive organization. There is a global community of generous volunteers dedicating their skills and creativity to expanding the project and promoting the cause of international voluntary service. We believe in partnership not ownership. Consequently, we have a growing list of partners who are not only contributing to the project but are also collaborating in the CPWF innovation and implementation.

Rotary Canberra provided seed-funding. Engineers Without Borders is providing technical assistance. GDG provides governance and administrative support for project 'J623N Abundant Water'. Local support and the understanding of working conditions in LaoPDR is provided by our local partner, SEDA Laos. NGOs committed to implementing AW's CPWF technology in their development villages are Health Unlimited Inc, Care International, Church World Service and Community Development and Environment Association (CDEA). Several organisations have committed to using and distributing the information in their drinking water projects, among them are Health Unlimited Inc and the UNU International Network on Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH).

Abundant Water is a community of highly motivated volunteers bringing their skills and creativity to the project of developing the CPWF innovation and promoting its diffusion to developing communities. Expertise is shared in the areas of project management, video production, website management, communications, graphic design, commercial accounting, pottery, rural development in SE Asia, fund-raising and not-for-profit organization management.

Get Involved.

The Abundant Water project is made possible by the generosity of individuals and organizations just like yourself. Whatever your skills they will be highly valued in AW Inc and you will be joining a vibrant and highly motivated community. We are open-source, that is, we are open to whatever task or skill you will contribute.

Abundant Water Inc relies entirely on the funds raised by our community. Our organization is managed by volunteers allowing all funds to be spent in the field in Lao PDR for the potters' training, translators, testing and pilot-project management. All donations over \$2 to this Global Development Group approved aid and development project J623N Abundant Water are tax deductible in Australia & USA. Our needs are modest and thus whatever you contribute will be significant and make a difference. We ask businesses committed to 'corporate social responsibility' to consider partnering our GDG project G623N Abundant Water.

Abundant Water Inc is realising the promise of the clay-pot water filter; join us and become a part of the Abundant Water community. You have the skills and resources to progress the Abundant Water project.

Contact : Project Manager : sunny@abundantwater.org

Secretary : Abundant Water 12 Macleay St Turner ACT 2612 Australia
Phone : +61 2 62471079