



Christian Community Development

Reflecting the love of God for all people

As Lifewater joins together with other organizations, governments, and individuals to end the global water and sanitation crisis, we recognize that Christian community development comes from a significantly different perspective than non-Christian community development efforts.

Christian community development is a reflection of the love of God for His people. In the Bible, we see Jesus healing people physically and spiritually, meeting their needs and bringing them into relationship with Himself. As people transformed by the love of God, we respond to God's call to share the gospel with others through both physical and spiritual actions such as studying the Bible, building and restoring relationships, improving community health, and increasing access to safe water.

At Lifewater, our goal is that God would transform communities; we work through His love, manifested in physical and spiritual changes. The principles outlined below serve as reminders to each member of the Lifewater team about how we work in communities to achieve this goal.

Principles of Christian Community Development

1. GOD IS ALREADY AT WORK

We must remember that God loves the communities we serve and He is already working there. We look for the ways that God is already at work so we can join in those efforts. Through prayer and intentional care for every household, particularly those in the margins, we seek to join in the good work of the Kingdom.

2. EVERY COMMUNITY HAS ASSETS

Every community has gifts, skills, and contributions to make; we can help them recognize and utilize these assets. By mobilizing the skills already present in a community, we encourage community confidence so they can take on other challenges in the future, including those that are larger and more complex.

3. PEOPLE MUST MEANINGFULLY PARTICIPATE IN THE CHANGE PROCESS

Communities know the pride of ownership, and when they actively participate in their own transformation, they're more likely to sustain their water source and experience a sense of unity among their neighbors. Our role is to create achievable goals for communities to meet, encourage their contributions and participation, and celebrate their success.

4. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Some members of the community may need additional support to improve their situation (such as orphans, widows, and those with disabilities). Special attention should be given by the community and our staff to care for those experiencing the greatest vulnerability.

5. WE ENTER AS LEARNERS AND STAY AS GUESTS

The people in the community are the best long-term solution to their problems. We enter in humility and earn the right to stay by our positive contribution.

6. IDENTIFY ROOT CAUSES

Many community challenges are complex. We don't settle for simple answers; we are inquisitive and try to truly understand what motivates (and discourages) the change process. As people working in a global context, we must seek to understand cultural characteristics that influence community behavior.

7. DEVELOP CAPACITY OF NATURAL LEADERS

Local leaders have the ability to leverage change in their communities. We find and develop these natural leaders. We encourage them, disciple them, and challenge them to lead the community to a better future.