



WaterStarters in Kenya

Creating sustainable water solutions for rural communities in Kenya



The challenges in Kenya's water sector

1. No access to clean, safe drinking water

To date, 27% of the people in Kenya do not have access to improved water sources such as piped household water connections or public taps. In rural areas, more than half of the population source water from unsafe surface sources, such as lakes, rivers and ponds, which causes substantial health and economic impacts. To illustrate, poor water quality predisposes children to diarrhoea, the second leading cause of death in under-five children. On the other hand, socio-economic development lags behind in water-stricken areas. For instance, school attendance is negatively affected, especially for the girl-child as women and girls are forced to walk an average of 10 km every day to get water. The water situation in Kenya is even further exacerbated by climate change that is causing more droughts.

2. The impact of COVID-19

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for clean water and handwashing has become even more profound. Water is life. Without access to safe water, it is impossible to maintain good health. Kenya has a population of 54 million people and a known fragile healthcare system with only 155 Intensive Care Unit beds. That is why we need to act now by bringing sustainable water solutions to the people in Kenya.

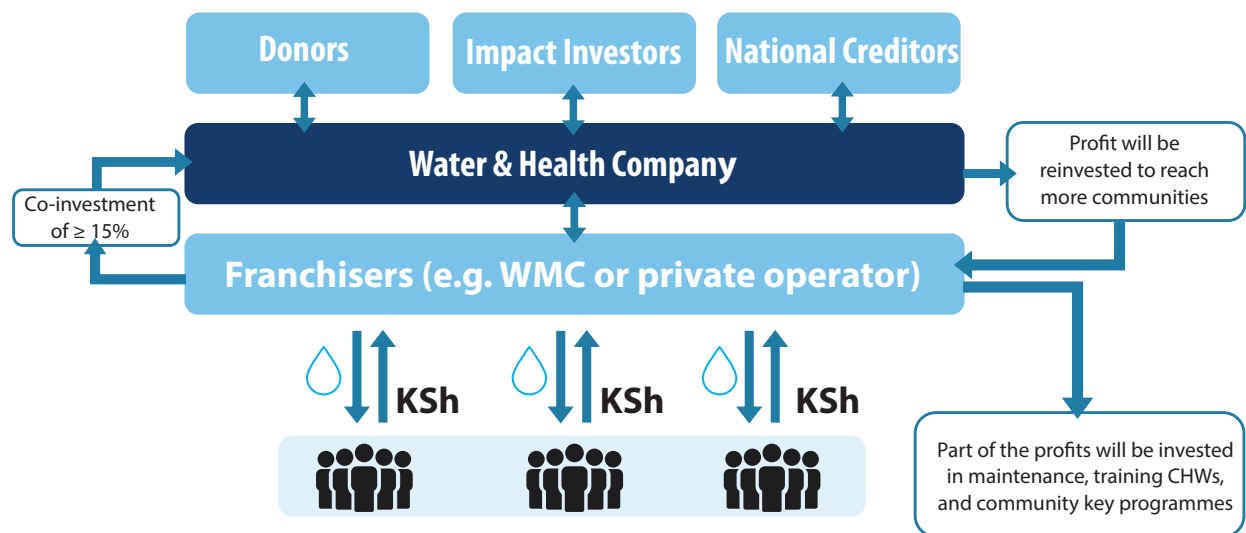
3. Technical and financial knowledge gap

Technical knowledge of water infrastructure maintenance is lacking in Kenya, resulting in 30-40% of the installed water systems (primarily diesel pumps) in rural areas being broken. Furthermore, Kenya faces a huge resource gap of €10.5 billion in its water and sanitation sector, due to a lack of government funds. Additionally, investment funds for entrepreneurial water models are lacking, and thereby the capability for long term financial planning of the communities to invest in sustainable boreholes.



The solution: WaterStarters

WaterStarters is a water and health company, consisting of the WaterStarters Foundation and Amref Health Africa. With WaterStarters, we want to create sustainable water solutions for rural communities in Kenya. The company will increase the access to, and use of, sustainable safe drinking water for people in rural and peri-urban Kenya, combined with a community-based health program.



- **Donors, impact investors and national creditors** form a blended approach of financing in order to run the Water & Health Company.
- The **water and health company** is responsible for the selection of project sites and the operational management. The company oversees the franchisers. Amref will mobilise communities, train community members in maintenance, and train community health workers in the health and hygiene promotion program.
- **Franchisers** are the ones responsible for the day-to-day running of the water point, maintenance, and the revenues generated. Varying per community, a franchisor is either the Water Management Committee (WMC), a private operator within the community, or a private operator outside the community. The franchisers co-invest at least 15% of the total investment.

Our target

Our target is to realise over 580 upgraded or new water points within six years, thereby reaching **1,5 million people**, with a total investment budget over €30 million. To get there, we first need to test our approach. We will pilot WaterStarters in two Kenyan communities in 2020 with a total required budget of €300,000. The pilot will give approximately 4,000 people access to clean and safe drinking water, combined with health promotion activities. This includes sharing critical information on personal hygiene with community members, and early detection and referral of suspected cases of COVID-19.

The impact of WaterStarters goes beyond water provision

WaterStarters does not only contribute to clean drinking water, but also aims to achieve a broader impact:

1. **Access:** Access to safe drinking water for rural and peri-urban communities
2. **Health:** Quality water production and hygiene promotion activities resulting in a reduction in waterborne diseases such as diarrhoea, intestinal worms, and parasitic infections
3. **Socio-economic development:** Boosting economic development in the communities by generating employment opportunities in operations and maintenance of the boreholes
4. **Financial inclusion:** Financially including communities in the WaterStarters model (e.g. by cash, or mobile money)
5. **Gender equality:** Supporting gender equality by increasing education possibilities for girls and (in) direct job creation for women



The partners

WaterStarters is created by a network of partners, that are of great value and help to achieve the above mentioned goals. WaterStarters connects more than 60 years of local knowledge and field presence of **Amref Health Africa** in Kenya, with the business acumen of the Dutch **MegaGroup**, the technical wholesaler in water technics behind the **Waterstarters NL Foundation**. **Maji Milele** delivers online and prepaid metering systems and has a wealth of knowledge in social entrepreneurship in Kenya. **Acacia Water** provides practical solutions to integrated water management challenges at all scales, and the Kenyan-Dutch joint venture **MAJI Water Storage** has clean and durable water storage solutions. Lastly, a leading fast-growing commercial bank, named **Sidian**, is willing to give franchisers a loan in order to finance their share in the program.

How you can help

We are still looking for valuable partners who can bring in both expertise, as well as financial resources.

For more information, please contact:

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Amref Health Africa ("Amref") is the largest international non-governmental health organization in Africa, that aims to improve the health of people by partnering with and empowering communities, and by strengthening health systems.

