



Sabasengo Community, Rwanda

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In recent years, the Sabasengo community in eastern Rwanda had a significant population boom. The rural community is now home to over 2,000 residents, most of whom relied on a nearby dam for all of their water needs. As an agrarian community, the residents used the dam to provide water not only for their families, but also for their livestock. Sharing the water with the animals contaminated it with dangerous bacteria that led to waterborne sicknesses. Sometimes residents avoided the dam by collecting water from irrigation channels, but this source presented a different danger—pesticides that washed in from nearby fields. Residents felt like no matter where they turned, their water was making them sick.

With such limited access to safe water, sicknesses like cholera and dysentery became common. Children were especially susceptible to the waterborne illnesses as their immune systems were not developed enough to stave off infection. When they became ill, they missed out on school, sometimes falling so far behind that they dropped out altogether. The water crisis in Sabasengo was impacting the community's health, livelihoods, and limiting the potential of their children. Community leaders knew something had to change.



A resident collects water from the dam.



The Living Water staff readies the rig for drilling.

“We used to get our domestic water from the dirty dam and in the irrigation channels. We were exposed to many waterborne diseases that impacted our lives greatly. We had many children drop out of school.”— Budayi Esidori, 74-year-old farmer

Budayi and other community leaders were determined to be agents of change in their community, so they sought outside help. Soon, they heard about Living Water Rwanda's work in a neighboring community and requested a water system of their own. The Living Water staff responded by constructing a piped water system that supplied both the residents and their livestock with separate and safe water. Now, the residents have an elevated water tank that safely stores plenty of water for everyone.

With safe water in abundance, the residents can use their time and energy in more meaningful ways, free from the burden of trekking for water that only made them sick. Now, they are confident that their water system will provide enough water for everyone. In addition, the residents are equipped with the knowledge to steward their new safe water source and safeguard their health.

Budayi is thankful for the convenience and safety of the community's new water system. He said, "The new water source is going to transform our way of living. Now, we have peace of mind that we will no longer have to drink unsafe water."



Residents use the new water system for the first time!