

An Unforgettable Experience: Volunteering with the World Water Corps® .

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Around the world, 884 million people do not have access to safe drinking water and 2.5 billion are without adequate sanitation facilities. Every day, nearly 6,000 people die from water-related illnesses, with the majority being children. However, Water For People has now given the water and wastewater industry the mechanism to make meaningful change with the development of the World Water Corps® .

The World Water Corps® (WWC) was launched in 2006. It is a volunteer program that gives water and wastewater professionals the opportunity to travel abroad and support the development of sustainable drinking water projects, sanitation projects and hygiene education programs. The WWC is working in program evaluation, monitoring, mapping, and baseline assessment. Hydrology will be added to their tasks in 2010.

Historically, Water For People (WFP) has operated in Bolivia, Guatemala, Honduras, Malawi and India but recently they have expanded their operations into Ecuador, Nicaragua, Rwanda, Uganda, the Dominican Republic and Peru.

Chris Rogers, a WWC volunteer, writes of his experiences in Rwanda:



Children in Malawi.



Bolivian Girls at a Community Tap

...the sole Canadian volunteer, I had the pleasure of working with a hard-working group of Americans and Belgians over a very intense two-week period in February, 2009. We were each assigned a university student (all orphans of the genocide), a group of local officials, and a sector in Kicukiro district. Our days were spent in the field, inspecting water and sanitation facilities, and interviewing community leaders and members of the local population. Our nights were spent documenting our observations. Our fieldwork exposed us to a range of generally miserable living conditions, from rural areas on the outskirts of Kigali, to the slums of Kigali itself. Rwanda has the highest population density in Africa. (The density of the entire country is higher than that of the City of Ottawa!) There was a lot to cover in two weeks.

Rwanda generally has a lot of water, most of the year. Unfortunately, there are extensive shortages throughout the dry season, and contamination is also a major problem. Most of the population in Kicukiro gets water from community taps and uses some form of latrine, which are often shared among several households. These latrines are often poorly constructed and in horrendous condition. The taps draw water from wells, or are piped in from a central source. Water



WWC Team in Rwanda

quality is unreliable, with suspected contamination from latrines and other sources. Those who can afford to, boil their drinking water. Many who can't, get sick and tend to die young.

One day I was waiting for my sector driver to pick me up outside an orphanage when I was swarmed by about 30 kids on their way home from school. One pulled out a text book and began teaching me to count in Kinyarwanda. They laughed a lot as I stumbled from one to five.



***A Rare Opportunity to Visit a Wildlife Preserve
in Rwanda***

The WWC is not for everyone but, if you feel you have what it takes, WFP needs you! Often, days are difficult and dealing with conditions in some of the poorest areas of the world can be physically and mentally straining. However, if you are up to the challenge we guarantee an experience you will never forget. For more information regarding the World Water Corps® please see our website, www.worldwatercorps.org or email abritton@waterforpeople.org.