

SUSTAINABLE WASH IN SOMALIA

Expanding access “for all” into conflict zones

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Background

About Arc Solutions

Mission	To create sustainable clean water access and improve water, sanitation, and hygiene practices in conflict zones
Where we work	Somalia, Central African Republic, Gaza

About this Project

Location	Shafici School, Mogadishu, Somalia
Beneficiaries	1,230 (1,200 students and 30 staff members)
Implementation completed	February 2014
Population without access to improved water sources	71%, the highest in the world
Project Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water purification• Hand washing stations• Community health training



Figure 1: A student enjoys clean drinking water at Shafici School

Motivated by Faith

We believe that we are called to go places where no one else goes to help people in need. Choosing to work in a predominantly Muslim country is also informed by our Christian worldview. Just as we receive redemption in Christ through grace and not through our actions, we believe all people should receive clean water and other basic services through grace, not because they fit a certain category or condition. We are compelled to show Christ's love to all people because all people are created in the image of God. Our faith also gives us courage to devote ourselves to this risky and challenging work.

Challenges

- Low community ownership at project sites where Arc Solutions International staff has been present during implementation
- Motivating operators to complete their duties (maintenance of the system)
- Remote monitoring and project management, resulting in a lower level of control over projects
- Lack of financial responsibility for repairs at some project sites

Conclusions

- Importance of cultivating community ownership, which poses an even greater challenge because communities are accustomed to passively receiving relief
- Working within existing structures, such as schools, has been an important component to the success of projects
- Our relationship with our security partner, the Somali Foundation for Relief and Development (SOFORD), is critical to the success of projects. SOFORD vets project locations and provides ongoing security
- Projects can be conducted safely in conflict zones when the appropriate risk mitigation strategies are used. We have had a 100% success rate in the safety of our projects and staff members

In summary, **sustainable WASH projects can be done in conflict zones!** The project at Shafici School is just one example of a project that, while not without challenges, has had a sustained, positive impact on the students at the school.

Accord WASH Principle 1 in Practice

“We aim for long-term WASH services that deliver lasting benefits to all”

Delivering long-term, lasting benefits: Many consider only short-term relief projects to be possible in Somalia. We challenge this concept by doing sustainable projects, standing in the gap between relief and development. By doing development work in conflict zones, we can help build the stability, resilience, and capacity of Somalia.

Providing services to all people: If, as a sector, we are truly committed to serving *all* people, we cannot avoid working in conflict zones. As conflicts continue in the developing world, it is important to establish methods for providing WASH services in these areas despite the risks involved.

Impact

Monitoring visits allow us to keep tabs on our projects and provide follow up when needed. The project at Shafici School has continued functioning since its implementation in February 2014, distributing a total of 24,577 gallons of water as of September 17, 2014. Recent visits have shown that the school has kept the system and surrounding area very clean, suggesting a high level of value and ownership over the project. Table 1 shows the results of an evaluation survey done before and after the project was completed, providing a snapshot of the project's impact.

Indicator	Before Project	After Project
Number of students surveyed	240	200
Number of students that had diarrhea over the last month	8	0
Number of days of school missed due to illness	36	0

Table 1: Impact of project on reported illness



Figure 2: Students at Shafici School use their new hand washing station

References