

Press release
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Contact

Press:

Julia Rüter
Siemens Stiftung
Tel. +49 / 89 / 54 04 87-1 10
julia.rueter@siemens-stiftung.org

**Safe Water Enterprise
Project Manager:**

Christine Weyrich
Siemens Stiftung
Tel. +49 / 89 / 54 04 87-3 01
christine.weyrich@siemens-stiftung.org

Water stations: “Safe Water Enterprises” with new partners in East Africa

Siemens Stiftung deploys 15 additional water stations in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, together with selected development organizations including SOS Children’s Villages worldwide, AMREF (African Medical and Research Foundation), and The Hunger Project. The concept was developed together with the Australian SkyJuice Foundation, which also supplies the filtration technology and the prefabricated kiosk modules. The model stations can be set up in rural areas and put into operation within two days. The aim of this development phase is to provide safe drinking water to approximately 10,000 families. Hygiene and entrepreneurship training improves the health situation in communities and contributes to Safe Water Enterprises becoming self-sustaining small businesses.

For nearly three years, Siemens Stiftung has been committed to a sustainable supply of safe drinking water in rural regions of Africa and Latin America. Safe Water Enterprises successfully adapt modern filtration technology to local conditions, offering a complete and replicable solution. At the core of the seven-square-meter large kiosk is the SkyHydrant water filter, which is able to process up to 10,000 liters of untreated water per day into safe drinking water without the use of any chemicals. The water flows with natural pressure from a tank through a membrane, operating without electrical power and extensive maintenance – which is necessary for long-term usage in rural areas. The water is supplied to residents in purified containers to prevent recontamination. About 500 families a day can purchase safe drinking water for an affordable price at the kiosk.

Economic efficiency ensures the long-term, independent supply of water

Community residents decide who operates the kiosk. Earnings from water sales are used to cover operating expenses. “In this phase of development, it is important to identify successful models to make the Safe Water Enterprise scalable,” said Siemens Stiftung Project Manager Christine Weyrich. “This includes the standardization of operating models, product portfolios and marketing measures ideally tailored to customers. Only when Safe Water Enterprises are financially viable in the long term, we can ensure a sustainable supply of safe drinking water to communities. At the same time, access to safe drinking water improves health and nutrition which is a requirement for further economic development and, ultimately, the basis for establishing additional small businesses.”

Education and training are the basis for acceptance and further development

Previous evaluations have shown that especially education and training play a decisive role for the success of the Safe Water Enterprise program. To that end, Siemens Stiftung develops health education programs for communities and schools, which address difficult topics in a playful way with interactive teaching methods and experiments. The programs aim to improve hygienic conditions and increase awareness for the importance of safe drinking water.

Siemens Stiftung
Kaiserstrasse 16
80801 Munich
Germany

Phone: +49 / 89 / 54 04 87-0
Fax: +49 / 89 / 54 04 87-4 40

The role of the kiosk manager is extremely important since responsibility for a Safe Water Enterprise requires diverse skills, including entrepreneurial idea development, knowledge of accounting and law, as well as marketing and customer acquisition. To meet these requirements, kiosk managers attend training programs, which Siemens Stiftung is currently expanding together with Kenyatta University. Not only kiosk managers but also other community members participate in the program to increase the social impact of the training. A coaching and mentoring program ensures the long-term support of kiosk managers in their work.

Opening of the first Safe Water Enterprise in Uganda together with The Hunger Project

“Experienced partners such as SOS Children’s Villages, AMREF, and the Hunger Project help to adapt Safe Water Enterprises to meet the needs of various communities and to integrate them into existing local structures,” said Weyrich.

For partner organizations, Safe Water Enterprises are an important complement to their existing work with local communities. In November 2013, the first Safe Water Enterprise cooperation was established with the Hunger Project in Uganda. “Easy access to safe drinking water is a major concern for people in rural centers. Safe drinking water not only means better health but also saves a lot of time, especially for the women who fetch it,” said Leni Rieppel, Director of the Hunger Project in Germany. “Thanks to Safe Water Enterprises, people are assured that the water is really safe. A small business in the community ensures the smooth operation of the water station. Thus, the station creates income, responsibility, and independence.”

Other partners who work permanently in suitable locations and are interested in Safe Water Enterprises should contact Siemens Stiftung at info@siemens-stiftung.org. Location criteria can be found [here](#). Additional information about Safe Water Enterprises is available on our [project page](#).

About the SkyJuice Foundation

“The SkyJuice™ Foundation is a not for profit organisation incorporated in Australia. The Foundation’s charter is to provide low cost, sustainable water treatment solutions for humanitarian projects and for emergency and disaster relief efforts. SkyJuice™ Foundation uses worlds’ best low pressure ultra filtration membrane technology to produce safe, sustainable potable water that is affordable using technology that is appropriate to communities in rural, peri urban and urban communities in developing countries.”

Further information: www.skyjuice.com.au

About the Siemens Stiftung

ENCOURAGE. empowering people. The Siemens Stiftung wants to empower people to actively address today’s social challenges and is dedicated to the values of Werner von Siemens. Together with partners, the foundation designs and implements local and international projects with the aim of promoting individual responsibility and self-initiative. The foundation is committed to enlarging basic services and social entrepreneurship, promoting education and strengthening culture. The Siemens Stiftung pursues an integrative approach and stands for responsible, impact-oriented and innovative project work.

Further information: www.siemens-stiftung.org/en