

Clean water for every day

Clean drinking water and functioning sewage treatment systems are things we take for granted in Switzerland. They are part of our lives. We need them to survive. And couldn't without them. Every day.

However, the daily lives of well over 700 million people around the world is very different. They have no access to even a minimum of clean water. This means that they have under 20 litres a day – less than half of what we use for our morning shower.

Whenever clean drinking water is rare people also consume poor quality water, for example from ponds. This is often contaminated with animal or human waste and causes severe diarrhoeal diseases. Every 20 seconds a child under 5 years old dies from a diarrhoeal disease because of contaminated water and a lack of hygiene. Almost all these fatalities occur in developing countries.

Water and hygiene are an inseparable pair. The one is a requirement for the other, and together they are a prerequisite for good health and development. This is why the Swiss Red Cross (SRC) is working in the deprived, rural regions of the world to help improve the water supply and build sanitary facilities to enhance hygiene.

The SRC is currently running water and sanitation projects in 13 programme countries. Together with the local population, the SRC builds wells or water collection tanks, installs pipes and distributes water filters. To improve hygiene, latrines are built and the population is taught about how important hygiene is in preventing the spread of diseases. Through these efforts the SRC has already been able to guarantee clean drinking water and sanitary facilities for almost 1.3 million people since 2005.

And yet the challenge is still enormous. The proceeds from the 2016 Swiss Red Cross Gala in St Moritz will go towards helping the victims of forgotten disasters and the water programme in Nepal.

The earthquake that hit Nepal in late April 2015 caused unimaginable suffering. Yet it is not the only natural event that has led to disaster in this Himalayan country. Almost



Rita Sarki (23) now has a well close to her home. In cooperation with the villagers in Diwang, the SRC has installed a 7 km water pipe and built nine wells. Rita used to have to walk several hours every day to fetch water.

every year, when the snows melt in the spring and then again during the monsoon, water flows down from the Himalayas through the valleys into the lowlands, turning narrow streams into raging rivers. While the region along the Indian border struggles to cope with flooding, people living in the western hills of Nepal lack clean drinking water. So, together with the village committees, the SRC builds water systems and latrines.

The mountain location befitted the construction of spring water systems, in which the water flows down into the valley with the help of gravity. The villagers lend a hand with the building and pay part of the cost. In rainy regions the SRC builds rainwater collection systems for individual households. To improve hygiene families are also shown how to build latrines out of local materials.

Thank you for your donation!

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Swiss Red Cross

