



Grassroots Business Initiative



Roundabout Outdoor

South Africa



Background

In rural Africa, the lack of access to clean water is a serious on going problem. Traditionally, women and girls collect water at the nearest stream and then carry the containers filled with water back home. The water from such open sources is often unclean, and time wasted carrying water could be better spent in school or at work.

What Are PlayPumps?

The concept for PlayPumps International was developed in 1996 by **Roundabout Outdoor** (www.playpumps.org), a South African company with a social mission. PlayPumps are innovative, low-tech devices that serve as both children's merry-go-rounds and an efficient source of water. They are installed directly above boreholes at schools in outlying areas. The energy of children at play is harnessed to supply villages with up to 1,400 liters of clean drinking water per hour. The water is siphoned into low-maintenance storage wells at a faster, more reliable rate than most traditional hand-driven pumps.

The pumps are often installed by locally owned micro enterprises at an average cost of \$10,000 each. They are an effective solution to one of rural Africa's most pressing needs, access to clean water. The PlayPumps International business model recovers the costs of maintenance through commercial advertising sales from firms such as Unilever, Colgate, Palmolive, Telkom, and Sasko. Further income is received from public service messages such as HIV/AIDS awareness and hygiene education.



Results To-Date

The installation of nearly 700 pumps across South Africa has benefited over 1,000,000 people. The International Finance Cooperation (IFC), is assisting Roundabout Outdoor to replicate this model to other countries such as Mozambique, Malawi, Swaziland, and Zambia. Since receiving a World Bank grant at the 2000 Development Marketplace, Roundabout Outdoor has been able to raise considerable funding from other sources to support this initiative. This expansion is being coordinated through IFC's Private Enterprise Partnership (Africa) program.

IFC's Involvement

In Mozambique, 30 pumps are currently being installed as part of a much larger program. After the successful completion of this phase of the project, a large geo-hydro census will take place with the aim of installing an additional 150 pumps across the country. Roundabout Outdoor's successful expansion into Mozambique has demonstrated that the concept could be replicated in another African country.

Over the next three to five years, PlayPumps will be installed throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. The goal is to bring the benefits of ready access to clean drinking water to 10 million underserved people.

In early 2006, with assistance from the IFC, Roundabout Outdoor launched the first stage of its expansion in Swaziland and Zambia, while continuing to install new pumps in South Africa. Plans for expansion in East and West Africa will soon follow.

IFC is working closely with Roundabout Outdoor and its partners to implement its expansion strategy, leveraging IFC's extensive presence on the ground in Africa. Part of IFC's intervention will be to design appropriate impact assessment metrics to help measure the benefits of PlayPumps to the public. Future support will be provided through IFC's technical assistance vehicle for Africa, PEP Africa.

