

Davis 100 Projects for Peace

Final Report-Summer 2007

Title: Digging to Surface Water Wells
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The project took place in Goffer State Farm in Koffele County of Oromia state, which is approximately 300 kilometers (190 miles) southeast of the capital, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The area has an average altitude of 8500 feet above sea level. The village gets plenty of rainfall during winter. However, because of the place's proximity to the equator, the weather during summer can be extremely hot and dry. Water which is an essential element to all living beings is nowhere to be found. People as well as their livestock suffer from the draught. People in my village spend most part of their summer searching for water. Some of them had to travel by foot for more than 30 miles to locate water sources. Some move to different villages in hope of finding enough water supplies during the summer time which causes tension between new comers and the locals.

The actual project itself took a month and ten days to complete. We built two wells which are 120 feet deep each. We wanted to build the underground water wells which are believed to yield higher quality water but since the cost to build those wells is twice as high (\$15,000 each), we altered our plan and built the surface water wells instead. The first 20 days were spent on gathering information to find the best way possible to reach the goals and complete the project. I talked with staffs at Save the Children USA in Ethiopia to see if they would be interested in contributing funds and building underground water well together. Unfortunately, they wanted to do it in a different location. Since I aim at improving the quality of life for people in my village, we could not join hands. We started building water wells on June 10th and finished it on August 20th.

The company which built the wells is called Selam Water Is Life Awassa, PLC. It is an NGO affiliated rural water well drilling company. They build rope and washer wells for 2500 dollars each. I decided that it is the best that we could build as many wells as our budget permitted. Unfortunately, due to time constraint only two wells were built during that time. There was \$2,300 left in the project, I plan to spend the money on purchasing soccer uniforms and shoes for the local boys' and girls' soccer teams and send it to them. The locals played significant roles in keeping the morale of the workers high and making this project happen. The local government required little or no bureaucratic procedure to start the project and use the land. The staffs at Methodist University, namely Magda Baggett, Evy Hounng, Dave Turner, and Jan

Turner made the project possible because they found the company who built the wells, bought the air ticket, and made valuable suggestions.

The goal of the project was to alleviate the water shortage problem in my village. So, putting the focus on the problem, we succeeded in building two wells. We had to bear some time constraints and hence were forced to limit our projects. However, I did consider some possible initiatives. For instance, I had some ideas about improving the local soccer teams by providing some basic necessities and also promoting peace. Soccer is believed to be the only source of entertainment they have that offers a sense of unity among the youth. But, the notion of water project was more alarming and appealing considering the needs of people. Therefore, I focused on the water project instead of focusing on project like teaching mediation techniques to solve conflicts.

The goal of the project was to improve the supply of water to the village and assuage water shortage problem. The villagers were very happy and grateful to the person with this grandiose notion and were truly touched by the project. After the completion of the project, they sent their gratefulness and their thankfulness filled with warmth to Mrs. Davis for her magnanimous generosity of financing it through me. I believe the project achieved its goal since the villagers are now able to access water right at their doorsteps anytime. There are up to a 1000 people who live in the area not counting the people who travel by the village. I am very certain that the wells will make a huge difference in the lives of villagers by bringing better and improved water supply in the village.

The clashing between unlimited wants or needs of the people and the limited resources, is the main cause of violence and hence the greatest enemy of peace. There have been several incidents in my village in the past, when people fought over water. These wells will improve the water shortage situation and hopefully lessen the incidents of people fighting in future. I am also certain that they will always be thankful of the great deed of Mrs. Davis and will bear hope since the help came from the other side of the horizon that they never had expected. This attitude will definitely make them rethink about their impression of their neighbors or people they are not familiar with. Traditionally, people at my village are very hospitable. Things are changing now because the villagers are more wary of people they are not familiar with. This project might inspire a turnaround in thinking.