Rotary District 5450

WASH Committee

Minutes of May 1, 2017

6th floor meeting room in the Denver Wastewater Management Division Building

**Attendees**

Gerard Dalziel Terry Baus

Irv Buck Don Howard

Mike Hitchcock Yarrow Spitzfaden

Bob Rose Bruce Halloran

Joshua Knight John Hendrick

Mikal Kmita

**Updates:**

Irv Buck described the challenge of sustaining yields from wells where the water table has dropped and little or no production is available. He is considering watershed management ideas such as surface ditches for recharge and supporting irrigation. Pumps that can support irrigation deliveries are needed to support ag operations that stop unless water is available. Meanwhile, other opportunities such as sewing clothes have been initiated.

Don Howard updated the Kenya SCOPE efforts including “Capture the Rain” with filters to make water available for agriculture, tilapia, and greenhouses. Although hand drills for well construction are available, assistance is needed to distribute water to the end uses. It was suggested that when technical ideas are needed to move a project forward, several volunteers from WASH and EWB could get together for a brainstorming and problem-solving session. Don offered to outline his current situation and define what specifically could be addressed, and a working session will be set to follow up on this opportunity.

This led to a suggestion that WASH participants create a sub-committee to collaborate on developing technical resources for project-specific knowledge as requested by project leaders. For example, latrines have been constructed but often lack plans for cleaning or solid waste disposal in a sanitary manner. The group could create alternatives for situations such as this. Reference material is available, and IDE has focused attention on this specific issue. How could the WASH group be more useful?

*Thanks to Gerard Dalziel for sending the latrine information below:*

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pit_latrine>

<http://www.sswm.info/content/single-ventilated-improved-pit-vip>

<http://www.wikiwater.fr/a10-ecosan-ecological-compost.html>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Composting_toilet>

<http://www.sswm.info/content/immediate-and-short-term-emergency-sanitation>

Don made a funding request for the “Catch the Rain” project in Kenya. The Arvada Sunrise Club is supporting it and requesting others to join in. More details are attached and through Don at donhoward12@gmail.com. 303-940-2502

**Rotary WASH Symposium Update**:

Date: October 7th, 2017. Location will be in the Denver Wastewater Management building, 2000 W. 3Rd Avenue.

The program committee has met several times and developed several high quality presenters and discussion sessions for the day. The other committees - marketing, fundraising, exhibitors, and logistics are underway and crafting details for the symposium. Bruce is generating momentum and tracking progress frequently.

**Georgia**

Bruce returned from a visit to Georgia and Steve Werner who is in the country with the Peace Corps and coordinating with the Georgia Medical Group (GMG). They met with Levan Metreveli who is a key leader of the GMG to continue discussing the process for entering into an agreement defining the program, and roles/responsibilities. Bruce was able to tour two schools where although latrines and bathroom facilities were improved, long-term sustainability and a comprehensive evaluation of the water sources and waste disposal had shortcomings. An MOU is drafted, and the organizational process continues to move forward.

**Presenter: Michal Kmita - The Invictus Initiative**

Michal’s interest and expertise is in creating sustainable community transformations. He initially assisted Carol Carper in Kenya, and in 2008 built a school and medical clinic in Afghanistan. This led to the formation of The Invictus Initiative.

The focus is on developing a local relationship with the community leading to long-term success in multiple areas. This offsets the common approach as described in “Toxic Charity.”

Michal described one success in Kenya with a clinic which had no electricity, and was very limited in the service they could provide. With the help of local electricians and volunteers, a solar panel was installed to not only supply the clinic but also charge cell phones locally. The solar electricity was able to offset as much as $36 per month in charging fees.



In Nepal, Invictus volunteers began their visit by becoming friends with families left homeless from the earthquake’s destruction of their homes. Rather than beginning with construction help, they found that water was either undrinkable or extremely expensive. Water filters were made available creating an opportunity to sit down and visit extensively with small groups. The word spread and created wider connections and long-term contacts ( = relationships).

Volunteers encountered many people sleeping on hard ground with only blankets. EWB volunteers crafted bedframes from junk material that raised them off the ground and helped retain heat. The project expanded and local volunteers spread the word for others to benefit.

Invictus volunteers spent time with people in Nicaragua helping them establish a water committee to evaluate needs and alternative ideas. There was no organization for local people to guide the use of water and assert controls to reduce water theft. Again, this was moved ahead through the local group with Invictus encouraging the discussions at the local level so they owned the opportunities and solutions.

Michal’s discussion was a valuable focus on how assistance can be provided through local groups becoming the problem-solvers rather than Rotary or other NGO’s sending short-term funds or material. Invictus does not provide funds or “hardware” such as wells or latrines, but they motivate local groups to devise their own solutions and find ways to pay their own way. The relationships lead to people identifying what they need and asking for creative ideas instead of a donation. This model is a useful lesson for Rotary. Several attendees agreed.

See the website, [www.theinvictus.org](http://www.theinvictus.org) for additional information and details.

**Next Meeting - Monday, June 5, 2017**

**Steve Werner and Bruce Halloran will discuss Georgia and how District 5450 could play a significant role. Please help welcome Steve back!**

John