Key Results:

- Since LifeStraw Follow the Liters began:
  - 500,000 primary school children now have access to safe water
  - 500,000 primary school children now have received WASH education
  - 7,500 primary school teachers have been trained in WASH
  - 7,500 LifeStraw Community Filters have been installed in schools
- The distribution of purifiers occurs only after funds accumulate through consumer sales, making LifeStraw Follow the Liters a self-sustaining business model, and enabling the company to connect its consumer sales with its humanitarian mission. This model has enabled a sustainable and predictable flow of funds for maintaining and scaling up the program, and has enabled rapid and efficient implementation.
- The LifeStraw Follow the Liters program allows consumers to make an immediate social impact and understand exactly what their contribution is and the impact it has. A consumer is able to provide safe water for a school child for one year from the purchase of one retail product, and view names and GPS locations of all the schools covered under the program, as well as see targets achieved over time, through a sophisticated electronic data collection platform.

IN 2011, VESTERGAARD COMMITTED TO improving women’s and children’s health in Kenya and India through its ongoing LifeStraw® Follow the Liters program where, for every LifeStraw product sold to consumers in the developed world, a school child in a developing country receives access to safe water for an entire school year.

The program not only delivers high volume water purifiers to schools, enabling them to have ongoing access to safe drinking water on the premises, it also provides comprehensive hygiene and sanitation education. This includes teaching healthy behaviors, such as handwashing, providing information, education and communication materials to each school, provision of an initial supply of soap for handwashing, and supporting the creation and/or strengthening of school health, hygiene and sanitation clubs.

In each school, Vestergaard’s local staff works with a group of student leaders chosen to be “LifeStraw Prefects,” responsible for the daily maintenance of the purifiers and for spreading healthy messages to their classmates. Vestergaard encourages equal representation from boys and girls to perpetuate the message that fetching and treating water is a responsibility shared by both genders. The company also trains all faculty and staff to ensure similar responsibility is shared amongst school leadership.

LifeStraw® Follow the Liters provides a direct link for consumers and enables funds to be spent efficiently with very little overhead and time-delays since the same company that sells the retail LifeStraw products also implements the program with products specifically designed for the developing world.

everywomaneverychild.org
PARTNERSHIPS

Key partners in this commitment are distribution partners, EarthEasy, Water N’Life, and JA Davey, which enable contributions from the sale of LifeStraw retail products globally to reach the LifeStraw® Follow the Liters Program. These partners also actively participate in program implementation.

Key on-the-ground partners in Kenya are the Kenyan Ministry of Health (MOH) and Kenyan Ministry of Education (MOE). Vestergaard works with local health and education partners to identify priority schools, based on need, to dually engage in community education and sensitization about the program, and to ensure follow-up and monitoring is done not only by Vestergaard staff, but also by MOH and MOE staff, in order to reinforce the messages and the importance of the program. By working with the government, Vestergaard is able to ensure that school administrators feel supported in their implementation and follow-through of the program, that any issues are reported to the LifeStraw team in a timely manner, and that there are available mechanisms for ensuring schools perform and maintain the filters.

LESSONS LEARNED

In original distributions, Vestergaard noted that it was very difficult to keep track of school names and locations, since many schools in a particular region have very similar names, but may have very different needs and population numbers. Vestergaard therefore assigned each school with a unique ID # and QR code, so that when staff collected data they could ensure that all the data was attributed to the correct school and that follow-up visit information could also be correlated. These school IDs are also tagged to GPS locations.

This has made a huge difference for tracking school progress over time. The company also uses barcodes on all purifiers which can be tracked according to each school and also help staff and school faculty easily communicate if a particular purifier is in need of repair etc. This has been helpful in preventing damage or theft. To date, every single purifier that has been distributed through this program is accounted for.

NEXT STEPS

In 2016, the LifeStraw® Follow the Liters program will be scaled up to new regions of Kenya and to India. Vestergaard hopes to have completed 100 purifier installlations in India by the end of 2016 and an additional 2,500 purifier installlations in Kenya by early 2017. In order to complete this scale-up the company will rely heavily on partners in both locations to help identify areas in greatest need and to assist with microplanning and logistics. The business model also relies on sales from retail products to fund this expansion. However, funding for this next step has almost been fully amassed. For further updates and to track progress, visit: www.followtheliters.com