



Water Wells in Africa How Much do They Cost?

Water wells in Africa. A great idea, but how much do they cost? Moreover, why are they needed? For most of us, clean drinking water simply means going to the sink and turning on the tap. Within seconds we have access to one of life's essential requirements. But for a majority of people in Burundi, Africa, clean water is far from reality.

Burundi is located in east-central Africa and borders Kenya and Rwanda. A mountainous country, Burundi relies heavily on agriculture for its economy. Most Burundians still make daily trips to a river and collect water in buckets. They then carry these by foot back to their homes for drinking, cooking and cleaning. With no purification or plumbing most Burundians have little assurance that their water is clean and safe to drink. Public health issues abound, but could dramatically improve through access to safe, reliable water sources.

How much do they cost? The Gazelle Foundation is still gathering data, but research shows that there are two basic well types that are commonly implemented in Africa. The first and most common are shallow water wells, which can cost from \$1,500-\$15,000 based on factors including soil condition, water table depth, climate, and proximity to services. Data indicate that most of these wells are in the \$3,000-\$5,000 range and are often hand pumped. They can typically serve as many as 400 people. Because they are shallow wells however, they can be subject to drought and be susceptible to disease.

Deep water wells require more expensive equipment but provide a more reliable water source during drought and can cost between \$18,000 and \$25,000. While these require an electric pump, they can serve as many as 3000 people. Deep water wells are often designed in conjunction with pipes running several hundred meters to provide broader access points for the community. While their cost is higher, deep water wells provide a lower cost per person and help a larger population base.

When funding water well projects, the Gazelle Foundation will work with our beneficiaries and consider all factors in determining the most appropriate type.