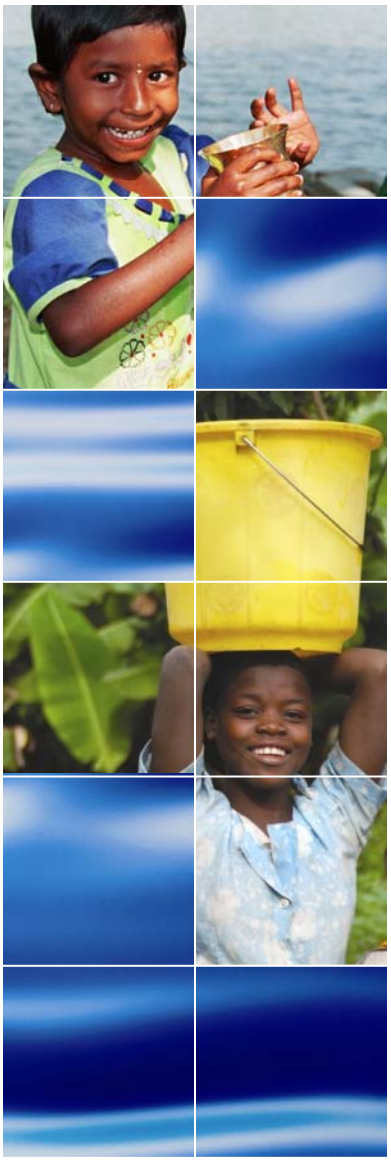
WEF FACT SHEET:
International Outreach

Water Environment Federation®
Preserving & Enhancing the Global Water Environment



"At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the Earth, with its diverse and abundant life forms, including over six billion humans, is facing a serious water crisis. All the signs suggest that it is getting worse and will continue to do so, unless corrective action is taken."

United Nations World Development Report, "Water for People, Water for Life" (2003).

A Multifaceted Approach To Engage WEF Members in Mitigating the Global Water Crisis

Background

WEF members and other water professionals around the world recognize the growing crisis caused by the lack of access to safe and sustainable drinking water and sanitation. Moreover, they recognize the negative impacts to public health, the environment, and local economies that the global water crisis has, especially within developing communities.

Simply put, WEF members understand both the impact of the global water crisis and what is required to expand access to safe and sustainable drinking water and sanitation. This understanding is not just an intellectual matter for WEF members, but rather is increasingly reflected as personal commitments to tangible projects that can mitigate the impacts of global water challenges. This is evidenced by the ongoing and growing support of WEF members to organizations committed to bringing access to safe and sustainable drinking water and sanitation to people across the world.

WEF's Multifaceted Approach

To support engagement opportunities for WEF members in meeting the drinking water and sanitation needs for developing global communities, WEF has sought out and engaged with like-minded organizations whose mission is to provide access to safe and sustainable drinking water and sanitation to global communities. WEF has identified organizations with name recognition among WEF members that are organized such that WEF members can have easy access for participation and support. Presently, there are three organizations that WEF partners with to further its members' aspirations to address global water challenges through practical and sustainable solutions. These organizations are Water for People, Engineers Without Borders–USA, and the Peace Corps.

Water for People

Founded in 1991, Water For People (www.waterforpeople.org) is a nonprofit international development organization that supports safe drinking water and sanitation projects in developing countries. Water For People partners with communities and other nongovernmental organizations to help people improve their quality of life by supporting sustainable drinking water, sanitation, and health and hygiene projects. Water For People supports projects with professional development advice, financial support, and volunteer technical services, and is currently working in Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

WEF provides financial support to Water For People, and several WEF Member Associations (MAs) support Water For People and/or have Water For People chapters within their MA. This provides for easy access for WEF members to support, financially and personally, the projects and efforts of Water For People. Water For People provides the following opportunities for WEF members to become engaged in mitigating the global water crisis:

- WEF members may provide financial support for Water For People through various fundraisers and entertainment offerings coordinated at the MA level. Financial support for Water For People also may be provided by utilities, consulting engineering firms, and equipment and service providers for the water industry.

To learn more about how you can become a part of this initiative, please contact:

Ken Maynard, WEF Director of International Programs
kmaynard@wef.org
703-684-2439

- WEF members have the opportunity to raise the awareness of the global water crisis within their local communities through fundraisers and entertainment offerings for Water for People during World Water Day (March).
- WEF members have the opportunity to participate in Water For People country tours offered throughout the year to better understand the goals and activities related to Water for People projects.

WEF members may participate in Water For People's World Water Corps and support the development, planning, and implementation of Water For People projects in targeted countries, or perform assessment visits in candidate countries.

Engineers Without Borders–USA

Founded in 2000, Engineers Without Borders–USA (EWB–USA; www.ewb-usa.org) is a national nonprofit organization that partners with developing communities to improve their quality of life through the implementation of environmentally and economically sustainable engineering projects, while developing globally responsible engineers. As of July 2008, EWB–USA had 216 chapters, more than 12,000 members, and projects in 41 countries.

Increasingly WEF members are participating in local EWB–USA chapters during their college careers and continuing their participation once they enter the work force. WEF members of all ages are supporting, financially and personally, EWB–USA projects and efforts. The organization provides the following opportunities for WEF members to become engaged in mitigating the global water crisis:

- WEF members may participate in local EWB–USA chapters and provide financial or development support for projects identified by the local chapter.
- WEF members, while working through local EWB–USA chapters, may select for financial or in-kind support a drinking water or sanitation project identified in developing communities, which may include communities in the United States and other parts of the world. WEF members can serve as technical advisers, reviewers, or mentors to EWB–USA project teams.
- WEF members can provide a wide range of skills including communications, IT, or grant writing expertise to support EWB–USA's institutional needs.

In September 2008, WEF announced a subsidy program intended to encourage its young professional members to join and become active in EWB–USA, and the two organizations are actively exploring additional ways to leverage their complementary strengths and capabilities.

Peace Corps

The roots and mission of the Peace Corps (www.peacecorps.gov) can be traced to 1960, when Sen. John F. Kennedy challenged young Americans to serve their country in the cause of peace by living and working in developing countries. Since that time, more than 190,000 Peace Corps volunteers have served in 139 host countries to work on issues ranging from AIDS education to information technology and environmental preservation. WEF's growing collaboration with Peace Corps leadership and volunteers includes:

- Coordination with WEF MAs on making Peace Corps volunteer opportunities available;
- Including WEF members' respective expertise in the Peace Corps disaster preparedness global database;
- Inclusion of World Water Monitoring Day and related activities in key Peace Corps in-country activities; and
- Participation of Peace Corps leadership and volunteers in various WEFTEC educational programs and WEFTEC exhibitor activities.