

# HOW EDUCATION AND SAFE WATER

## Combat Climate Change in Somalia

Imagine a child's day starting with a 5 or 10km walk to find water.

Instead of having breakfast and then excitedly meeting friends for the bus journey or walk to school, the youngster is up early for the long trek to bring water home so their family can cook and eat. And there is no school for them to go to.

This is everyday life for many children in Somalia.

### The Reality:

One mother, Fatima, described just how tough and relentless this task can be and the impact it can have on families.

"I always had a dream to take my daughter to school but wondered how I can do that while all her daily life is consumed with finding water," she said. "She wakes up early in the morning and walks for 8km just to bring enough water for cooking."



“One day she came back with the water looking extremely tired and her eyes were full of tears.”

The East African nation has long been facing conflict, civil unrest, and repeated famines – with one of the worst in 2011-12.

A severe drought hit Somalia, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya, causing a food crisis which affected 9.5 million people.

## Action:

In response to this humanitarian crisis, the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) embarked on a project to better protect vulnerable communities in Somalia against future water shortages.

The region is prone to drought droughts, and it's feared the effects of that climate change may increase the likelihood and severity in the coming years.

So, the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Program for Charity Works project operated by IsDB not only drilled 64 deep wells to provide safe, clean drinking water but also built 35 Islamic schools nearby.

This life-saving and transformative project aimed to use the wells as a hub to support growing local populations.

Long-term, sustainable communities were developed around the wells with the schools offering an important incentive for displaced families to return and resettle.

Each well is equipped with an elevated water tank and a solar powered pump.

Local farmers also benefit from being able to secure crucial water supplies for irrigation and their livestock.





## Method:

The four-year project began in 2014 and a rigorous process was followed for each well:

1. A hydrogeologist engineer surveyed the site to maximise potential from underground water flows. An additional socio-economic survey was also carried out to determine future use and sustainability of the site.
2. A borehole was drilled with soil and water samples regularly tested.
3. After drilling, a test pump was installed to measure if enough water could be drawn to supply the local population. This needed to be above 150 cubic meters per day. Another water sample was sent to a lab to determine if it was suitable for human and animal consumption.
4. Once approved, the well equipment was installed, including a pump, a 40 cubic metre tank, pipes, taps and troughs for animals.
5. Finally, the local community was engaged on how to best maintain the well working effectively via workshops with experts.

## Progress:

By the end of the initiative in 2018, all the wells had been drilled and 64 were fully operational and providing water to half a million people.

Construction of the 35 schools started in 2017, with 7,350 students benefitting from the new classrooms.

When Fatima woke up one morning and saw the drilling equipment, she couldn't wait to share the news.

"I ran to surprise my daughter, who started to cry even more than before, but this time they were tears of happiness," she said.

"A few months after completing the borehole project, the school was also there. My daughter is one of the students at this school now and she uses her time to do her schoolwork instead of wasting her time walking 8km to bring water home."

## Future:

Global warming is predicted to bring even more unpredictable and dangerous weather events with fears that floods and droughts will become more common and more deadly.

IsDB's response to Somalia's 2011 famine, dubbed the worst in 60 years, has developed not only multiple safe water supplies for 500,000 people but has also engaged with the population to create communities with schools at their heart.

Farmers and other businesses can also prosper around these wells, laying the foundations for potential economic growth and a more secure future.

