

CREATING SUSTAINABLE WATER SOLUTIONS THROUGH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Surge for Water & Proyecto Corazon (Project Hearts)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 2013, Surge for Water and Project Hearts have been providing families in Baitoa with access to safe water solutions through ceramic water purification filters and household water collection tanks (tinacos). Together, they have impacted over 5,000 people.

The Need Addressed

Baitoa is a small, rural community in the Dominican Republic where water scarcity remains an issue. Only a small fraction of homes receive water from the provincial water supply company, and this occurs typically only once every two to three weeks. As a result, families depend on rainwater collection and storage; purchase 5-gallon water bottles, which is an expensive investment; and often drink non-potable water, resulting in the spread of illness.



"Surge for Water, our partner, made it possible that Project Hearts could help a great number of people have access to water. Together, we've done a lot."

Ruben Ottenwalder, Founder, Project Hearts

Surge for Water is a Chicago-based 501c3 non-profit, that invests in communities with safe water, sanitation, hygiene and menstrual health solutions.



Project Hearts is a community-based organization in Baitoa, Dominican Republic whose vision is to empower individuals and groups in the community with the knowledge and resources needed to transform their community.



JOURNEY TO SUSTAINABILITY

Our Joint Impact

Since 2013, these grassroots solutions have had a direct, tangible impact on the communities we serve. Through the distribution of ceramic water filters and 300-500 gallon rainwater collection tanks or tinacos (large catchment systems that use gravity to supply water to a home), this partnership has reached more than 5,000 people in the community of Baitoa.

These solutions have not only served to protect people from the physical risks of unsafe water, but have also impacted local WASH infrastructure; increased educational opportunities; and improved the local economy. Families who had no choice but to purchase expensive bottled water are now able to direct their savings to other essential household needs, including food, school books, and farming supplies.



400+

household
rainwater tanks



350+

water
purification
filters

Reaching Program Sustainability

With Project Hearts, the program was able to achieve community independence and build local capacity, which are critical steps in reaching the sustainability of community-driven programs. In part, mobilization of local institutions—including community leaders, community members, and local businesses—ensured the success of WASH programs in Baitoa.

A turning point of the program was the realization that things had changed in Baitoa. Initially, community members relied on a microfinance model to purchase water tanks and filters. Over time, a large number of people who were still buying these solutions no longer needed to rely on payment options or discounts provided by the organizations, and were instead able to pay for them at full price. Consequently, Project Hearts no longer needed Surge for Water to continue providing a free or discounted option to the community as people paying full price could support those that couldn't pay full price. Further, Project Hearts can use the paid-in-full tinacos to purchase additional ones. Thus making the program related to rainwater collection tanks and filters self-sustaining.

JOURNEY TO SUSTAINABILITY



Martiza Ceballos, a Community Health Leader in Baitoa, shares how Project Hearts transformed her life...

"The filter is very important to me, as I no longer have to buy water weekly or monthly. I use the money I have saved to buy food, to improve my small shop, and to help others."

Strength in Numbers

The impact and testimonials from this program speak volumes about the importance of collaboration in locally-driven water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) efforts. While there are still water needs in the community, celebrating key milestones have been critical for next steps for both Project Hearts and Surge. In partnership with Project Hearts, addressing water scarcity has been a transformative experience that will leave a long-lasting impact on the lives of thousands of individuals for generations to come.

Takeaways for Social Entrepreneurship

1. Get a Full View of Challenges and Opportunities: This process helps any organization understand the unique situation of the community you are supporting, identify key stakeholders, and more.
2. Partnerships: Long-term results are possible through partnerships and community-led action.
3. Use the Right Financial Model; Selecting the best model to directly address needs of vulnerable families could pay for itself over-time.
4. Celebrate Program milestones: In any partnership or program, milestones should be celebrated and work should be reviewed. This makes way for future evolution.

5,000+
people
impacted

"It's been a joy working with Project Hearts and the community to implement their solutions for providing sustainable access to safe water that leads to long term Impact"

Shilpa Alva, Founder & Executive Director, Surge for Water



Improved Education



Improved Health



Improved Economy

To learn more about Surge: friends@surgeforwater.org | surgeforwater.org | [@surgeforwater](https://www.instagram.com/surgeforwater)

To learn more about Project Hearts: gracecares.org/project/project-hearts-2