



LifeStraw® Carbon For Water™: Programme Overview

Access to Safe Water to Over 4.5 Million People in Kenya.



In April and May of 2011, Vestergaard Frandsen distributed 877,505 LifeStraw® Family water filters to approximately 91 percent of all households in the Western Province of Kenya. This ten-year programme, called “Carbon for Water,” is providing more than four and a half million residents with the ability to safely treat their water at home. The programme has 46 full time staff in Western Province and hires 2,000 community health workers every six months to provide health education and training to every household that received a LifeStraw. The programme was solely funded by Vestergaard Frandsen and implemented in partnership with Kenya’s Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation and through collaborations with several other ministries including the Ministry of Education and the National Environment Management Authority.



Treating Water at Home, Reducing Contamination



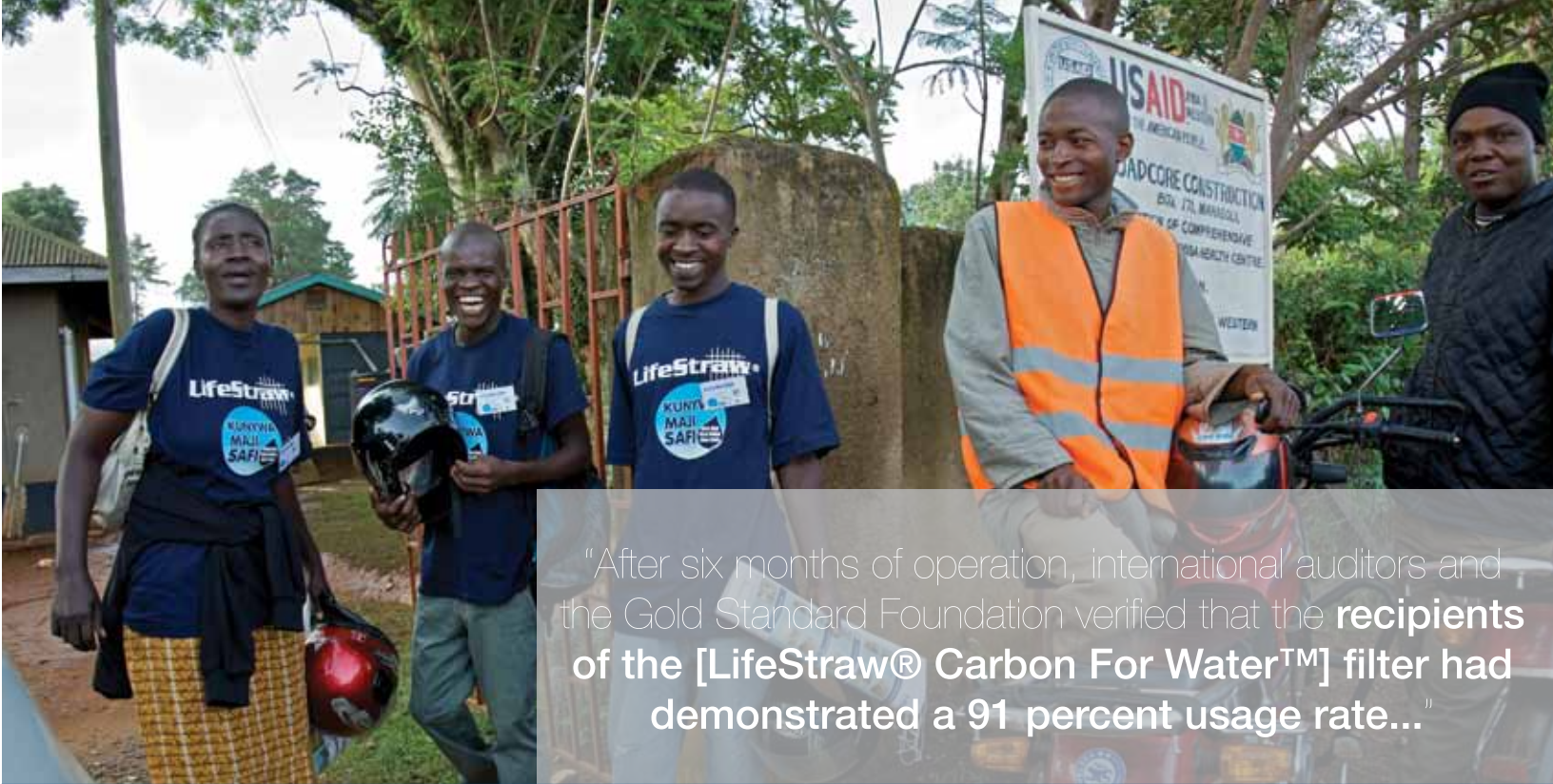
Prior to the programme, less than 10% of Kenyans in Western Province had access to piped water. The majority of Western Province consists of rural homes that are spread amongst farm lands and because of the high expense of reaching these areas, the government estimates that the majority of the Province will not have piped water within the next 10 years. Consistent access and cost were major barriers for other water treatment methods both in terms of firewood for boiling and in terms of other household treatment methods available for purchase. This left the majority of Kenyans in Western Province without access to safe drinking water. Other projects to improve access to drinking water such as the construction of sheltered springs, boreholes and pumps, do not adequately address the contamination that can occur during transportation to the home or from inadequate storage once in the home. By providing households with LifeStraw® Family and complimentary health and hygiene education as well as instructions on safe storage, Vestergaard Frandsen has enabled households to treat their water within the home, cutting down on the risk of contamination and subsequent illness.

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and my employer has even given me a raise
because of the increased yield that I harvest."

Samuel's Story.

Samuel Kutsusha is a dairy and banana farmer who lives and works in the hills of Eshisiru, in the countryside outside of Kakamega Town. "I once had typhoid for four months," Sam recalls. "But since I received the LifeStraw® my health has been very good." Not only has LifeStraw® Family left him feeling better, but it has also brought improved economic prospects for the young farmer. "I no longer lose work days to being ill, and my employer has even given me a raise because of the increased yield that I harvest."





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High Usage and Acceptability.



Every six months Vestergaard Frandsen uses a comprehensive survey of a randomized and representative sample of approximately 15,000 to 20,000 households in the province to assess usage rates, product acceptability and volume of water filtered. Usage is reported and assessed through questions about the frequency with which a family filters and water, their ability to properly demonstrate the filtering process and identify the device's safe water tap. Surveys also assess consistency of water filtration, proper backwashing procedures, and use of a safe storage container. After six months of operation, international auditors and the Gold Standard Foundation verified that the recipients of the filter had demonstrated a 91 percent usage rate, with usage defined as filtering at least once every two weeks and 83 percent regular usage, with regular usage defined as filtering at least twice per week.



Innovative Financing and Sustainability.



The costs of the initial distribution and ongoing programme maintenance will be recouped with carbon financing, as the LifeStraw® Family filter eliminates the need to purify water by boiling it, and thus reduces the current and future need to burn woody biomass that results in carbon dioxide emissions. Vestergaard Frandsen will only recoup its significant investment in this programme if the LifeStraw® Family is adopted and regularly used by households. To this end, Vestergaard Frandsen has established a strong and long-term presence across the province. The company has opened 32 district-level maintenance and education facilities, staffed by 46 Kenyans, to ensure ongoing programme success. In addition to offering free replacement and repair services for the LifeStraw® Family water filters, the programme strategy is built on effective community engagement using extensive social mobilization and community education initiatives. The programme utilizes a network of over 1,500 community volunteers to encourage LifeStraw usage and provide complimentary health education on an on-going basis to households. Programme staff are also active in teaching LifeStraw use and complimentary health education in nearly 4,000 primary schools throughout the province.

The First Programme of its Kind.

The program was the first safe water project ever to be implemented with carbon financing and, when registered, was eight times larger than any other project in the Gold Standard voluntary market. This is also one of the largest privately funded safe water projects in the developing world. While the scale of this water project is unique, the approach has considerable potential to scale-up rapidly in other provinces and to be replicated in other countries.



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